

THE FOUNDING OF
THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

A HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH
VOLUME II

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1953

by
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Translated by
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE PRESENT VOLUME CONTINUES THE HISTORY WHICH WAS begun in the volume entitled *The Beginnings of the Christian Church* and carries the story to the death of Origen. It is indeed the second volume of a work which is projected in five volumes covering the entire history of the early Christian period.

I again have to thank Professor Lietzmann for the material he has willingly placed at my disposal in preparing this volume for the English-reading public. He has been kind enough to revise the whole of the typescript, which, it is now hoped, gives a reliable interpretation of what he wished to write. At the same time he supplied a chronological table for the present edition, and I am indebted to Professor A. J. D. Farrer and Dr. J. L. Matthews for help in drawing up a short additional bibliography for the use of English-speaking students. The Rev. Sidney Myers, B.A., of Bath, and my wife have again kindly given their help in reading the proofs and preparing the Index.

B. L. W.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE PRINTING OF A SECOND EDITION AFFORDS A WELCOME opportunity to revise the translation thoroughly, and to correct errata. I have received invaluable help from Mr. Harry Cowlishaw, of Beaconsfield, in seeking a flexible and idiomatic English style, and I wish to record my gratitude to him for his great contribution to the present revision. The Rev. H. Chadwick, M.A., Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, has kindly sent me numberless corrections, especially of the footnotes; innumerable suggestions for making these notes more valuable to readers having access to English writers, and to their editions of authorities; and he has revised the Select Book List. All this has placed me, and the publishers, under a singular debt of gratitude; this note is the barest acknowledgement of what is due to him. My wife has read the proofs, and offered many suggestions; without her help I could not have done the work involved, and I cannot say how much this Second Edition owes to her skilful assistance and never failing patience. I also wish to record my high appreciation of the ready help and the expert advice given by the Rev. G. H. Gordon Hewitt, M.A., editor of the Lutterworth Press, and his assistants, throughout the period when this edition was passing through the press.

B. L. W.

BEACONSFIELD.

May 1, 1949.

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Chapter One

THE WORLD EMPIRE OF ROME IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES

THE EMPIRE OF AUGUSTUS AIMED AT ENSURING PEACE in the whole civilized world; its title to fame was its success in reaching this objective, and the principal task of all the emperors was to maintain the peace thus achieved. The thousand peoples and tribes bordering on the Mediterranean were so closely bound together by the advantages of this state of affairs, that no rebellions from within could endanger the unity of the empire. In the year of the three emperors following on Nero's death, there were only local disturbances, and these were quickly over. The flames of the Gallic insurrection on the Batavian border were due to special circumstances, and Vespasian extinguished them firmly in the same manner as he put an end to the Jewish attempt to gain freedom. The real danger to the Empire lay in wait beyond the borders. On the Rhine and on the Danube, Germanic and, to some extent, Slavonic tribes were driven by elemental forces from the stage of primitive existence into the sphere of history; on the Euphrates, the Iranians of the Near East pressed forward to the Syrian coast. Taught by its experiences under Augustus, the Empire, for almost a century, had maintained its borders in the west defensively, and had only pushed them forward in isolated and safe places, and with the greatest caution. The conquest of Britain, begun under Claudius and completed under Domitian, was the most significant event during this period. Under the Flavian emperors, the defensive character of the maintenance of the frontiers was even more definitely emphasized by placing great fortifications along the boundary in order to protect the border country, on the upper Rhine and on the Danube, against hostile attacks. These fortifications consisted of wooden towers and wattle-work fences; and the progress of this method of defence can be traced from Vespasian to Domitian by the fragmentary remains that still survive.

Trajan recognized that the dangers could not be fully disposed of in this manner, and so he turned back to the modes of thought familiar to the military minds of early Rome. He marched into the land of that enemy which for the time being seemed the most threatening, and fought two severe and bloody wars (A.D. 101–6) against the Dacians, who inhabited the present-day Roumania. In the end, this region was completely incorporated into the empire as the province of Dacia. Trajan's column in Rome still gives us vivid records of the famous deeds of these wars.

Before Dacia was completely conquered, Trajan prepared further measures for the safety of the Empire on the eastern border. The legate of Syria was ordered to put an end to the remaining semi-independence of the tribes of Bedouin who were united in the kingdom of Nabatea. In this way the new province of Arabia arose contiguous to Palestine on the eastern and southern borders. Water conduits, barracks, and roads were built; these ensured the economic life of the new province, and, at the same time, drew a line between the Roman empire and the vast Arabian wilderness inhabited by free Bedouin. The really dangerous zone lay, not here, but on the Euphrates boundary. In that region, the empire of the Iranian Parthians had threatened the Roman empire with war from the very beginning, and the fact that the peace concluded by Augustus had lasted so long depended on the inner circumstances of the Parthian empire rather than on the Romans. Hence the emperor felt that active measures to ensure the safety of the frontier were inevitable in this region. War was waged for three years (A.D. 114–16), and not only the Parthians but also the Armenians, who were allied with them, were vanquished; three new provinces, Armenia, Assyria, and Mesopotamia, were established. By this time a series of new provinces lay beyond the earlier boundaries of the empire, and extended from the river Theiss to the Black Sea, from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf, and from the Euphrates to the Sinaitic peninsula. This was an extremely generous protective region, and it had been quickly conquered by overpowering forces. It now required an extended period of quiet gestation in order to grow into organic union with the Roman empire, and really

to afford the protection which its creator expected from it.

It was questionable whether the Empire possessed the power for solving this problem, and when Trajan died in A.D. 117, after having completed his work, his successor denied it immediately on commencing his reign. A warning sign was given in A.D. 115, when Jews in Egypt, probably in conjunction with the fellahin, who were terribly oppressed, conspired an insurrection which extended to Cyprus and Cyrenaica. Only after two years was the Emperor able to supply the troops necessary to suppress it. Even in other regions, everything was not as peaceful as it ought to have been. Hadrian therefore drew the inevitable but inglorious conclusion, viz. to abandon Armenia, Assyria, and Mesopotamia. It was decided to keep Arabia and Dacia, in spite of a certain hesitation in regard to the latter, and these provinces were in fact retained. It was clear that Rome was no longer in a position to make high-handed conquests, but only to defend its former possessions; this was the task upon which Hadrian concentrated his entire military concern. The fortifications along the borders were pushed forward in many places, and they cut long straight lines through the country. Their principal element now consisted of a mighty palisade which ran from the Neuwied basin to the neighbourhood of Regensburg. In Britain, a wall was built across the island from Solway Firth to the mouth of the Tyne.

Hadrian did not possess the military genius of Trajan, and therefore sought to establish a condition of the Empire which did not demand from the emperor the virtues of a field-marshall; but he was an excellent administrator and had a genius for organization, a fact which was also of advantage to the army. The latter faithfully fulfilled his requirements: for almost half a century it protected the peace of the Empire. Battles for maintaining the safety of the frontier never quite ceased, but they seldom exceeded the ability of the frontier guards. Antoninus Pius used the Trajan model when he erected a pillar to his own honour on the Field of Mars, but he had no occasion to decorate its shaft with a ribbon of martial reliefs. That was reserved for his successor, Marcus Aurelius, whom the necessities of the empire dragged from his quiet meditations

into a stern war for its existence. A philosophic sense of duty was strong enough to enable him, although without military inclination or genius, to solve a problem severer than that which had faced the soldier Trajan.

The first danger threatened on the eastern frontier, where the Parthians were once more on the point of extending their rule over the Armenians; already they had destroyed the Roman legions marching to prevent them. Large masses of troops had to be withdrawn from the Germanic frontier in order to provide the forces necessary to conduct the war which now became inevitable. After four years' fighting, the goal was reached. The Roman empire confirmed its military position in Armenia, and pressed its frontier to the left bank of the Euphrates. The ancient Macedonian fortress of Dura received a Roman garrison in A.D. 167, and became the sally-port for future invasions into Parthia. Hardly had this war come to an end when a new and greater danger broke over the Empire.

For a long time unrest had flickered in and out on the western frontier. In Britain and on the upper Rhine, the frontier defences had been broken through, and it had required hard fighting to restore them. Then, all at once, the Marcomanni and the Quadi, from Bohemia and Moravia, swarmed irresistibly over the Danube into the Empire; they crossed the Alps and besieged Aquileia. Plague which had begun during the Parthian war raged in the whole of the Empire, carried off an immense number of people, and was particularly active amongst the crowded masses of troops. Food was short, and the state-coffers were empty: collapse seemed imminent. Marcus Aurelius mastered this danger. He brought armies together, making use of those who were capable of carrying weapons wherever he could find them. He was successful in warding off the invasion: he himself marched into the enemy's country, overthrew all the allied tribes, German and Sarmatian, in a continuous series of invasions, and took possession of their country. The war lasted fourteen years, and then ended finally. The Emperor, in victory as in peace-time, wished to follow Trajan's example, and to push the Roman frontier over the Danube. Bohemia, Moravia, and the land between the Danube and the Theiss, were to become the Roman

provinces of Marcomannia and Sarmatia; but Marcus Aurelius died in A.D. 180 at his headquarters in Vienna before his project could be realized.

Commodus, son and successor, had no hesitation in abandoning his father's plans; he vacated the occupied regions and granted the enemy favourable conditions; and this, not owing to keen insight as was formerly the case with Hadrian, but for the sake of convenience. Nevertheless his father's victories did not remain without result. The various enemies were permanently injured, and did not again endanger the Empire. Peace reigned on the Danube frontier for two generations. Even on the Rhine all was quiet for a long time, until, in A.D. 213 under Caracalla, a thrust of the Chatti and the Alemanni opened a period of continuous border warfare, which only issued in an era of peace after more than twenty years. During these years of insecurity the *limes* was strengthened: on the Rhine, a broad trench and a rampart were added to the palisades, and on the Danube, a wall ten feet high was built along the entire frontier.

The cautious placing of the frontier on the Euphrates could not be maintained in the long run. In A.D. 198 Septimius Severus marched forward and made Nisibis the capital of the transformed province of Mesopotamia, a province which now extended to the Tigris and was so strongly protected, from a military point of view, that even weaker emperors were able to defend it. Meanwhile the Parthian dynasty came to an end after being weakened by continuous struggles for the throne. The ancient royal family of the Sassanids spread its power out from Persopolis, and, in A.D. 226, Ardashir I became the ruler of a new Persian kingdom which set aside the Parthian dominion; the king announced his programme of restoring the frontiers¹ of Cyrus and Darius. The Parthians had been very uncomfortable neighbours for the Romans, but the Persians became their embittered and unappeasable enemies. For them, pressure towards the west was a historical duty, and they drew the sword against Rome in order to avenge the blood of Darius on the heirs of Alexander the Great.² In other words, they felt themselves to be the protagonists of the suppressed

¹ Herodian, *hist.*, 6,2,2. 6,4,5

² Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p. 3

peoples of Asia against Europe, and they worked at this task for four centuries, with increasing success, until their place was taken by the surging peoples of Islam who finally broke the opposition of Europe.

The wars in Mesopotamia began c. A.D. 230. Ten years later, the province was in Persian hands, and five years later again, the Romans once more stationed their troops between the Euphrates and the Tigris, and then concluded a bad peace with Shapur I. About the same time, the leading tribe of the Germanic movement of peoples, viz. the Goths, appeared on the lower Danube. They broke into the Roman province and laid Thrace waste as far as the vicinity of Salonica. The emperor Decius lost his life in A.D. 251 fighting on the defensive, and his successor purchased an armistice with money. The province of Dacia was lost. At the same time, plague broke out again. Various emperors who enjoyed but a short rule, either in succession or contemporaneously, defended themselves, though with hesitation, against Germanic and eastern invaders. When seventy years of age, in A.D. 260, the emperor Valerian fell into the hands of the Persians, and died in prison while the Goths marched plundering through Asia Minor. His son Gallienus strove manfully with all the dangers, and was continually threatened by mutinous troops and the opposition emperors that they set up. He was compelled to suffer the rise of a buffer state with its own army in Palmyra, because it served as a bulwark against the Persians. The Roman empire had never seemed so near to complete collapse as during the seventh decade of the third century.

The period of 150 years, which rolled by between Trajan and Decius, shows us clearly the progressive decay of the Roman empire and its power. The tension between the military requirements for protecting the frontier, and, on the other hand, the financial and economic resources of the Empire became ever greater; at last this brought about an inner decomposition.¹ That the wars of Trajan had overstrained the resources of the Empire was immediately apparent in the necessity for debasing

¹ Of fundamental importance, M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*

the coinage; the silver denarius which under Augustus had had an intrinsic value of about eightpence, and which fell to about sevenpence when Nero reduced the size of the coins, was now debased, by an admixture of 20 per cent copper, to a value of less than sixpence;¹ prices rose correspondingly. Hadrian knew why he liquidated the policy of his predecessors: it could only be carried out at the expense of the inner health of the state, and this the Emperor wished to preserve at all costs. Events justified his policy for half a century.

From Trajan to Marcus Aurelius there was a period of high culture and a secure development of commerce and industry. On all hands this came to expression in magnificent buildings whose remains can be seen even to-day. The cities became the centres of life. The well-to-do middle class and the great capitalists were responsible for an economic prosperity which comprehended all the provinces, and the educated classes frankly expressed their gratitude for the enlightened reigns of Hadrian and the Antonines. But the inner dangers could only be postponed, not abolished. The pre-eminence of Italy diminished irretrievably as regards politics, military strength, and economic well-being. The old nobility were either destroyed by assassination, or else had no descendants. The populace degenerated by the incoming of endless hosts of barbarian freedmen, and, on this account, as well as because of political aspirations, had little military value. From as early as Vespasian, the legions recruited no soldiers in Italy.² Moreover, the prospering provinces made themselves so independent of Italian goods that the emperors were compelled to institute artificial devices for saving the economic condition of the ancient central state.

The provinces were now in every respect the Empire's sources of power: even the army had been recruited from provincials since Hadrian's time. These men received Roman citizenship immediately on entering military service, and were intended to be the defenders of their immediate homeland. But this made an exchange of legions between east and west extraordinarily difficult. Hadrian spent half of his reign on

¹ M. Bernhart, *Handbuch Z. Münzkunde*, pp. 20 f.

² Mommsen, *Ges. Schriften*, 6,38

journeys through the provinces, and, throughout the east, was unwearied in forwarding the glory of Greek culture. This must not be understood as mere restlessness and romance, but as earnest concern for the security, progress, and cultural advance of wide regions of the Empire upon which the stability of the whole depended now more than formerly.

The course of development is clearly reflected in the wearers of the purple; the first emperors were all Romans. Vespasian and his sons were at least Italian. The families of Trajan and the Antonines descended from the early nobility of Spain and Gaul with a Roman culture; Septimius Severus came from the same class in Africa. But through his consort, the Syrian priestess Julia Domna, the element of barbarian provincialism mounted the throne, and affected the immediately succeeding generations, until the time of the Illyrian soldier-emperors. The provinces first conquered Italy, then the provinces languished, until at length there remained nothing but the soldiers.

It came about in the following manner. The economic prosperity of the Antonine period had no firm foundation. The necessities of the wars of Marcus Aurelius, and the depopulation of the Empire by the plague, brought the good fortune of the period to an end. The misgovernment of Commodus and the confusions following upon his assassination formed a melancholy conclusion to this era. Septimius Severus decided on a policy of severity, and therefore erected a purely military dictatorship. All the auxiliary resources of the state were stretched to the utmost extent in order to maintain the armies, which were now quite indispensable for protecting the frontier. Even the state officials were recruited more and more from the army; and, from the hosts of deserving under-officers, there grew a new nobility of officials, who could not be really regarded, however, as cultured persons. The first half of the third century was the crucial period of the economic collapse. Values fell continually through the debasement of money. Under Marcus Aurelius, the denarius sank to about fourpence-halfpenny; c. A.D. 200 it had still a silver content of about threepence, but after A.D. 260 it was only of impure copper and had a compulsory circulation similar to paper

money; even this official circulation went down to about one farthing by A.D. 290.

The army ate up all the fruits of labour, and the imperial policy, finding it impossible to open up new sources of power, contented itself with ruthlessly pumping out those which it already possessed. Caracalla¹ put it drily when he said: "No man except me needs to have money, and I need it in order to pay the soldiers." The propertied bourgeoisie was destroyed. To a large extent, great possessions were commandeered by confiscation after a sham legal process. All others were burdened with intolerable loads. The propertied inhabitants of the cities could be mulcted for everything: for the prompt payment of taxes to meet the entire sums demanded of the city and its surrounding region; for every extra requirement ordered by troops passing through; or demanded by some official on any excuse whatsoever. In addition to this, all the members of the "ruling" public bodies were obliged to provide what was necessary for the prosperity of the city and the pleasure of the people. To be freed from the duty of accepting municipal office became a much desired privilege. That last and most painful resort of self-defence, abandonment of all personal possessions, was not rare: but it is significant that, by an imperial edict, those who took this course were explicitly declared to be inculpable; nevertheless they were in fact by no means protected from harsh treatment.² In such circumstances business and social life were in bonds. Money ceased to circulate, and the economics of barter entered once more into its inalienable rights. The legions who were fighting on the frontiers could no longer prevent the armies of the barbarians from falling upon wide stretches of land, to say nothing of the fact that the legions were unable to deal with the innumerable bands who took to piracy and brigandage. Moreover the "peaceful" passage of troops through the country, as well as the struggles with one another of pretenders to the throne, had effects which suspiciously resembled those of hostile attacks.

The only class upon which all the concern of the Emperor

¹ *Dio Cass.* 77, 10, 4.

² Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 2, 194. 328 n. 42. 344 n. 44. 368 n. 49. Wilcken, *Chrestomathie*, n. 402. Apparently Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, 7, 23

concentrated was that of the soldiers and, at times also, that of the small cultivators from whom the soldiers were drawn. Even Septimius Severus recognized the marriages contracted by soldiers on active service, and he permitted married soldiers to live outside the camps. In time, this led to farm settlements on the part of the forces, and the foundation of military farm colonies in fortified places. But this development did not help to increase soldierly virtues, or to forward the warlikeness of the army. In the second half of the third century, it became necessary, as a consequence, to hire warlike and unencumbered barbarian tribes: and that led to further results in the succeeding period. Military and economic necessities were inevitably interwoven, and they drew all the other elements of civilization in the empire after themselves in their downward path.

Tacitus must be read if we are to grasp fully the change in the spiritual structure of the Roman people effected by Domitian's fifteen year massacre of mental life. Already in his forties, he seemed to be prematurely old, and, at the beginning of a new period of activity, he regretfully observed that it was easier to suppress spiritual life than to re-awaken it.¹ But Trajan was the herald of a new period of freedom: from all sides we hear echoes of the thanks expressed by those who were set free, and Tacitus was able to attain the full extent of his greatness under Trajan's enlightened régime. His *Historiae* and *Annales* are the finest historical works which Rome presented to the world. Darkened by a gloomy seriousness and heroic resignation, his outlook on the future is not optimistic but full of grievous anxiety and tragic fear. Nevertheless only a century had passed from the happy days of Livy, and Trajan's sun was still radiating its life-giving rays over the Empire. But Tacitus was a unique man and, along with the highest gifts of genius, he had also received the disturbing talent of being able to see farther into the future than any of his fellows.

His friend Pliny was entirely happy, and felt himself the heir of an age of spiritual bloom to which he bore witness in letters written in a polished and rhetorical style. Within his narrower circle of vision, he was right in this respect, even if

¹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, 3

one allows for his excessive appreciation of the literary dilettantism which surrounded him.¹ This dilettantism was neither more nor less than the expression of a genuine love for the mental refinements of life, and an active acceptance of the classical traditions from Cicero's time. Of these ways, Quintilian had been the prophet, and he had died only shortly before. Among Pliny's circle of friends was the young Suetonius, who fulfilled, under Hadrian, the hopes which had been set on him. The satirist Juvenal accomplished his best performances during Trajan's time. None of these three men had a mind of the first quality, but they used their gifts so excellently that their influence can still be traced on the world's literature. After their death, the Latin muse was dumb in the city of Rome: with Trajan, the genuine literary tradition of Rome came to an end. The reliefs on Trajan's pillar show how much of its artistic creative power was still alive. The round *clipei* which have been preserved on Constantine's arch, and the marble barriers of the speaker's platform in the forum, show the same thing.

A new period began with Hadrian; it was dominated by inspiration drawn from Greece, and men began to pay homage to the past. The tendency which was now arising is known as "archaism". Just as the Greeks, oblivious to the speech of the living present, imitated the Attic classics when they produced literature, so now, in the Latin sphere, it became the fashion to go back over Cicero to the early Latin style. Fronto the African was the great protagonist of this tendency. The world has rightly forgotten him and his compeers with the exception of Apuleius, whose numerous writings reached their climax in the romance of the *Golden Ass*. Here a splendid narrative style has banished the contemporary dilettantism. Towards the end, the pure swelling music of a mystic religiosity gives us a powerful impression of what had developed in the Antonine period out of the religious romanticism of the Hadrian era. With Apuleius, ancient Latin literature came to an end: only in the fourth century did there suddenly appear, in solitary greatness, "without father, mother, or descent," the remarkable historian, Ammianus Marcellinus.

¹ Pliny, *Epist.*, 1,17. 3,1,7. 4,3. 8,4. 9,22; very significant are 4,8 and 7,4

Rhetoric dominated decadent Latin literature. Even Tacitus gave way to its seductions; and it was responsible for the fact that Latin authors were still writing after they had nothing of value to say. Greek literature lived on rhetoric to at least an equal extent, and indeed, after Vespasian, developed new blossoms in this art often described as that of the "second sophists". A number of men who were great in their day were brought forward by the movement; the zeal of eminent patrons, some being of the highest rank, founded, in many places, professorships in rather academic subjects, and heaped honours upon the most prominent sophists. Their most splendid representative was the Athenian, Herod Atticus, who used his enormous wealth to erect majestic buildings on the classical sites of Greece; meanwhile, assisted by the favour of Hadrian and the Antonines, he largely dominated literary life; but his buildings have withstood the passage of the centuries better than his speeches. In Trajan's time there were the sermons of Epictetus the Stoic addressed to the educated, and the popular and sometimes sentimental speeches of Dio Chrysostom. These men were opposites, but both possessed a profound spiritual earnestness, and strove in different ways but, in the end, to the same noble goal of improving mankind by philosophic education. Epictetus, who came from the slave class, was by far the greater, because his ethical interest seems to be quite unalloyed, and to have required no earthly ornament. Moreover he recognized no subsidiary aims.

Both Dio and Epictetus came from the north-west of Asia Minor. About the same time, Greece was worthily represented by Plutarch, who conjured an ideal Greece from the mighty past of his nation, and, in his finely constituted soul, brought his efforts to practical effect. His biographies and moral tractates have aroused admiration in every age; and, in his writings of a religious and philosophical character, there is a tragic echo of an honourable but hopeless attempt to rescue dying gods, which fact also makes him winsome. He wrote a series of parallel lives of great Greeks and Romans, quite in the spirit prevalent in Trajan's times. The Emperor Hadrian himself, however, was the one who proclaimed the primacy of Greek culture. He had travelled through all the provinces,

but had always held up Greece and its spiritual heritage before the eyes of others: acting as Zeus Olympios, he travelled about the world and built temples which did homage to his imperial divinity under this the highest of Greek names. No city received more kindly concern than Athens, where even to-day the gate of Hadrian separates "the old city of Theseus" from the "city of Hadrian and not of Theseus" which he had newly founded.¹ It was a just recognition of genuine values: the powers of the Empire, which still survived and which could be used for the spiritual unification of the provinces among themselves, rested upon what was Greek; moreover, the Greeks were indispensable mediators in effecting the amalgamation of the oriental countries. The seed which had been sowed by Hadrian brought forth abundantly in the Antonine period. Alongside a fairly large number of genuine specialist scholars and a swarm of mere babblers, we now discover men of Greek tongue who may well claim to be of literary importance, whereas Rome's own power diminished.

Persons of smaller importance were Arrian, who has preserved for us copies of Epictetus's lectures, and who, in his mature years, acted as a new Xenophon by writing the history of Alexander the Great; and Appian, whose Roman history has lasting value. At the end of the Antonine period, Pausanias wrote a traveller's guide for curious visitors to Hellas which was now officially recognized as a classical country. This guide is not only an invaluable symposium of ancient material, but also reflects, in general terms, the taste of the period for archaeology and religious interests of a romantic character. The most eminent representative of the spirit of the times was the orator Aristides of Smyrna, a pupil of the Herod Atticus already mentioned. The intellectual values which it was possible at that time to introduce into his carefully composed speeches, he did introduce, and his panegyric of Rome is an ideal picture of the last days of the bloom of the Empire, and is painted in colours drawn from life. His contemporaries, including the Emperor, esteemed him highly, and he himself thought it not inappropriate to claim a place above Demosthenes and Plato, and to ascribe to his life's work as an orator

¹ G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, n. 1045

a value equal to the military deeds of Alexander the Great.¹ If, however, we study the celebrated "sacred speeches", and read how often, and with what consequences, the famous man suffered bodily pain; what drastic cures the god Asklepios ordered for him by means of visions in dreams, and how at last, after sixteen years, he was cured by the god's miraculous power; and if we remark that nothing of this is raised into a higher sphere, or ennobled by faith like that, say, in Brentano's accounts of Katherina Emmerich; but that he writes with nothing more than the complete banality of an hysterical hypochondriac: then the veil is torn aside. We see that even the best scholars of the period disguised a mere inner poverty in the shining tinsel of the stage, and, through the goodwill of the applauding public, were taken to rival those heroes of the brilliant past whom they pretended to describe. For these people and their public, the real life and force to be found in history lay beyond the literary stage which constituted their world.

The Syrian writer, Lucian, was a man who knew it and who, as a consequence, could not take his own period seriously, nor any of its great men, himself included. He pulled in pieces whatever came his way, and especially those things which claimed to be of the highest eminence, religion and philosophy. He did everything, however, in a brilliant fashion, and with a wonderfully keen sight for the weak places and the humorous traits of his opponents. The old gods of Homer and the new figures of the orient, epic demigods and heroes of modern romances, religious prophets and preachers of Cynic ethics, pedantic professors and loose girls, all this sort of thing whirls in a mad carnival about the reader of Lucian's writings, amuses him for a time until the taste palls, and the man with the cap and bells finally surfeits him. The others had good intentions but they were weaklings playing the part of the strong. Lucian believed in nothing except his own advantage and, with a Mephistophelian self-satisfaction, he calumniated everything that was holy to others, and did so just because it was holy. In this way he was the prime ancestor of a type of journalist who only came fully into his own in the nineteenth century.

¹ Aristides, *Orations*, 50, 19. 20. 48. 49. p. 430. 438. Keil

The emperor Marcus Aurelius stood apart from all this literary activity. It had done him no harm that Fronto and Herod Atticus should have instructed him in fashionable rhetoric in Latin and Greek. When a Stoic put Epictetus's lectures into his hands, the course of his spiritual life was decided; the Roman emperor became the respectful disciple of the Phrygian slave. In the most difficult period of his life, while with his army in the field against the Marcomanni, he kept a private diary, not sentimentally like the men of the eighteenth century, but for the purpose of severe self-examination and criticism of all earthly values. He pitilessly destroyed every kindly pretence, every attractive trait. Man was but a mortal frame called into existence for a brief span: then his body would fall into decay, and all-ruling nature mould his remains into new forms, the soul would be scattered in the air, and everything changed. Nothing was stable, and even fame died with posterity. How long you lived was indifferent: it was only necessary that you do your duty, i.e. that you offered the gods a pure soul and showed kindness to mankind. Do not hope for thanks, nor let yourself be embittered by thanklessness. Depart from this world in an agreeable mood when nature calls you from the stage; for what she does is good. Many thousands using this diary for their meditations have drawn strength from it. Frederick the Great read it in his tent when the Seven Years' War was depressing him: but he added contempt for man, a feature which was foreign to Marcus Aurelius's nature.

Philosophy was religion for the best people of this period: she and she alone showed the way to the next world, and to the recognition of a higher power. The old gods of Hellas and Rome were dead, and did not come to life again; in this respect, even interest in the archaic changed nothing, although it had dominated the educated class from the time of Hadrian. Aristides the orator composed a whole series of prose hymns to the gods: one after the other was celebrated in resounding words, but, if we look more closely, we find Stoic monotheism was the genuine kernel of his belief in the gods, and the separate divine figures appear as personifications of cosmic powers which

streamed from the original source in the Father of All. This is expressed with special clearness in the speeches to Zeus and to Sarapis, which for him are only two different terms for the unity which comprehends the world. This is the theme which re-echoes in all the speeches, and is produced in ever renewed variations, the motives being furnished by the traditional mythology. Nothing is said about religion, about a personal comprehension of the divine in an overwhelming, and at the same time emancipating, experience. Aristides maintains a calm attitude towards the world of the gods: he preaches of it but does not live with it, or at least in it. Yet he makes an exception: Asklepios was for him a genuine and powerful healer, and had a personal form. He had even appeared to Aristides numberless times in dreams, and had concerned himself with a thousand details of his life. In nature, he was that one universal godhead whom we also call Zeus;¹ but Aristides had experienced him as a personal helper and as an active god; he depended upon Asklepios with all his soul —without however deducing therefrom any further consequences. Plutarch was much nearer to the ancient faith when he explained the practice of resorting to oracles by an elaborate doctrine of daemons, and when he himself filled a priestly office in Delphi with a clear conscience. For him Apollo was the universal god of his monotheistic faith, but, in a different fashion from Aristides, he believed in an active intervention of God in history; with Plato he believed in the immortality of the soul, and in a compensating retribution on an ethical basis.²

Philostratos was another writer who likewise conceived religion from the standpoint of philosophy. He belonged to the circle of scholars in Julia Domna's court, and was also in favour with Caracalla. At the instance of the empress, he wrote a biography of Apollonius of Tyana, who was celebrated under Domitian as the itinerant prophet of a neo-Pythagoreanism. He sketched Apollonius, however, only to suit the taste of the third century: as a saviour of a philosophic and religious kind who, by his preaching and miracles, proved that he was in association with the godheads to a degree exceeding human

¹ Aristides, *Orations*, 42. 4. p. 335. Keil

² Cf. Wilamowitz, *Glaube der Hellenen*, 2,497–508

capacity, and who revealed the mystic way to apotheosis by asceticism and contemplation. In accordance with the trend of the times, the orient was regarded as the original source of wisdom, and India was placed high above the Egypt which had once been much celebrated in this regard. Yet Apollonius was at bottom Hellene, and, in spite of all his enthusiasm for the orient, claimed the absolute pre-eminence of Greece for mankind. By making extensive use of geographical handbooks, he spun out the biography into a discursive travel romance, and by cleverly pretending to have reliable sources of information,¹ he enjoys many credulous readers to the present day.

In the course of time, criticism of Homer's gods raised doubts as to the historical faithfulness of that poet, and the educated world discussed the problem of the historical existence of Homeric heroes and the reality of the mythological tradition as to their fate. We are reminded of the beginnings of apologetic attacks on Biblical criticism in the period of the Enlightenment, when we see Philostratos proving the trustworthiness of Homer: in a burial mound in Aia a skeleton of eleven ells had come to light: Hadrian had had it buried afresh. The bones of Orestes dug up in Nemea measured seven ells. Moreover, fifty years earlier, people had gone on pilgrimage in crowds to the promontory of Sigeion where the remains had been discovered of a giant twenty-two ells long, who had been killed by Apollo.² This and others of a similar kind were the proofs on which he proceeded to build another kind of world. The heroes still lived, appeared at times to their friends, and did so in the prescribed size of ten to twelve ells.³ The heroes spoke with them in a friendly manner, and readily gave information about the Trojan war, with all sorts of details not to be found in Homer. Obviously the public interest was great as regards these matters, in spite of scepticism otherwise. Moreover, the heroes afforded assistance in all sorts of cases of need. They blessed the fields, but avenged themselves cruelly if proper respect was denied them. Anyone who wished to be convinced of their existence need only go to the Black Sea and, on the west from the Bosphorus, look for the island of Leuke.⁴ There lived

¹ Ed. Meyer in *Hermes* 52,409 ff.

³ Philostr., *vita Apoll.*, 4,16. *Heroicus*, p. 673

² Philostratos, *Heroicus*, pp. 668 ff.

⁴ Philostr., *Heroicus*, pp. 745 f.

Achilles and Helen, and sailors had frequently taken them by surprise.

It is only a step from such records to creepy ghost stories with witches and magic: Lucian has preserved for us a splendid collection of the kind, and many parts of his mimic travel-romance might have stood, with small alteration, in Philostratos's book of heroes.¹ Philostratos scarcely believed the nonsense which he served up so abundantly to his readers; but it is significant that the general, educated public of his time desired such reading material. It could combine philosophical scepticism with crass superstition, and the remains of conceptions based on a nature religion with pantheistic and Platonistic mysticism; and it listened with quiet expectation to the Pythagorean preaching of metempsychosis, even when crudely emended for the worse. It was in this atmosphere, also, that the romance was written about the youth who had been bewitched and changed into an ass; it was composed by an otherwise unknown Lucius of Patrae. Lucian had entertained his readers with a pretended extract from it, whereas Apuleius retained the substance and atmosphere, extending the whole considerably, and furnishing it richly with additional passages of a similar coloration. His purpose, like that of the original author, was to offer his readers serious food for thought of a moral and religious nature, a fact which does not lead to very flattering conclusions as to the mental quality of those readers.²

We have already observed that, in the first century, oriental influence made itself felt on the religion of the Greek world.³ During the second century, the influence pressed towards the west and had marked effects; in the third century, it reached its peak. The figures of the old national gods gradually paled. It is true that, as at an earlier date, they still appeared on the imperial coinage, but, to an increasing extent, they were replaced by the personifications of abstract ideas:⁴ Concord, Fortune, Faithfulness, Freedom, Peace, Salvation, Victory,

¹ Lucian, *Philopseudes: Verae Historiae*, 2,6–36

² Photius, *Bibl. Cod.*, 129; Lucian, *Lucius*, Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*; cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenist. Wundergesch.*, pp. 32–34

³ Cf. vol. I, pp. 154 ff.

⁴ Vivid sketch in Gnechi, *Monete romane* (3rd edit.), pp. 290–99. This kind of personification became considerable under Vespasian and only ended with the triumph of Christianity. Bernhart, *Handbuch*, I,8,102

Ability—or the “genius” of the Empire, the emperor, or the city. Indeed, state temples were erected in honour of these names¹—clearly a retreat from the concrete, ancestral religion into the abstract world of the philosophers. On the other hand, the oriental gods, who were popular amongst the masses, and exercised much power, were not added to the figures stamped officially on the imperial coinage. Isis and Sarapis were an exception after Vespasian had accorded them special honour,² similarly Cybele from the time of Hadrian. When Septimius Severus the African mounted the throne, he occasionally stamped the Punic “goddess of heaven”, and even Eshmun, as saviour, on such coins as he wished should be used specially in Carthage. Elagabalus caused the sacred stone, fetched from Emesa, to be likewise depicted.³ These were temporary fancies however, and, on the whole, oriental figures of this character were at variance with what was usually stamped on the coins.

The official buildings of the Roman state temples spoke a clearer language.⁴ When Augustus's restoration had faded, temples were only built to the ancient gods if there was some special dynastic interest to be served. This held in the case of the temple of Venus and Roma which Hadrian built, and really also of the two temples of Minerva built by Domitian, who ordered himself to be described as Minerva's son.⁵ On the other hand, during this period seven temples were erected to the abstract godheads, and five to the deified emperors.⁶ Granted that Marcus Aurelius consecrated a temple to Mercury as an expression of thanks for a miraculous gift of rain which saved his troops from dying of thirst during the Quadian war; when we read, however, that an Egyptian sorcerer, Arnufis by name, induced this miracle by invoking “Hermes of the air”, it is clear that Mercury was only the Latin name covering the Egyptian Thot;⁷ and the temple was therefore really dedicated to an

¹ Temples of Concordia, Felicitas, Bonus Eventus, Justitia, Pax, Fortuna, Indulgentia, were built from the time of Augustus to Marcus Aurelius: Wissowa, *Religion*, 2nd edit., pp. 596 f.

² Bernhart, *Handbuch*, 1,63 f. Jos., *Bell.*, 7,123

³ Bernhart, *Handbuch*, 1,59, 106. 2, plate 49,5 (Elagabalus); Gnechhi, *Medagliioni romani*, 3 p. 39; plates of Dea Caelestis in J. Hirsch, *Auktionskatalog*, 31 plate 32, no. 1534; R. Ball, *Auktionskatalog*, 6 plate 45, no. 1795

⁴ A list is given in Wissowa, *Religion*, 2nd edit., 594–97

⁵ Philostr., *vita Apoll.*, 7,24

⁶ *Supra*, note 1

⁷ Dio Cass. 71,8,4

oriental god. At least from the beginning of the empire, Isis enjoyed an increasing number of temples in the city,¹ and, under Caligula or Claudius, a state temple on the field of Mars was dedicated to her along with Sarapis. The Antonines remained tardy towards worshipping other gods. Only when Septimius Severus commenced his reign did a new period begin. He himself built a temple to the gods of his birthplace, Leptis Magna, and gave them the Latin names of Liber and Hercules. He dedicated another to Bellona Pulvinensis who is only a variant of Cybele.² Jupiter Dolichenus the war-god of Commagene received a state temple on the Aventine.³ This dynasty broke with the original Roman tradition which gave to foreign gods a place outside the Pomerium, the ancient sacred boundaries of the city. Caracalla erected an immense temple to Sarapis on the Quirinal⁴—and also, in order to create new hosts of worshippers for the most sacred gods, he abolished all the restrictions of Roman citizenship in the entire Empire, and gave this honour freely to the millions.⁵

There was a conscious purpose in thus setting aside the peculiar prerogatives of what Rome stood for. Septimius Severus was African, but his consort, Julia Domna, was the daughter of the high priest of Baal of Emesa. Her sister's grandson, Bassianus, was brought up for the same priestly office, but at 14 years of age, he mounted the throne and gave himself the honourable name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and, along with this, still bore the title of a high priest of the god Elagabalus. He made this god of his into the ruler of the entire Pantheon. He ordered the sacred fetish stone to be brought from Emesa to Rome. He erected a handsome temple for it on the Palatine, close to the imperial palaces; here were gathered together any holy stones and celebrated fetishes that could be seized, as well as the vestal fire. The Syrian god celebrated a sacred marriage with the Carthaginian Tanit, goddess of heaven,⁶ at the same time as the emperor acted the

¹ List given in Kiepert-Huelsen, *Formae urbis Romae*, 2nd edit., p. 17; cf Wissowa, *ibid.*, 352 f.

² Wissowa, *ibid.*, 349 f.; cf. Dessau, *inscr.*, n. 4180–2

³ Wissowa, *ibid.*, 362

⁴ Jordan-Huelsen, *Topographie der Stadt Rom.*, I. 3, p. 423

⁵ Mitteis-Wilcken, *Chrestomathie*, II, 2, n. 377; also Cumont, *Oriental Relig.*, p. 84.

⁶ *Script. hist. Aug. Heliogab.* 1,6. 3,4. 7,1–5. Herodian, *Hist.*, 5,5–6. Cumont in Pauly-Wissowa, 5,2220 ff.

earthly counterpart by his marriage with the vestal Aquilia Severa.¹ Even as emperor he continued to be the Syrian priest of the sun, and bore himself accordingly until the soldiers killed him, along with his grandmother, who had been the real ruler. His name became accursed, and the fetish was sent back to Emesa; but what had taken place had effects in the succeeding period, because, although in form it was a foolish freak of the emperor, in fact, it was a pointer with a historical foundation, viz. the oriental sun god was really destined to be the final lord in the heaven believed in by this decadent world. When he was deposed he handed down to his successor both his name and also his birthday on December 25: Christ then ruled the world as "the true sun of righteousness".

In the cult of the sun, a certain process reached its climax, a development which was of increasing moment during the Hellenistic period: religious thought, fertilized from the orient, comprehended various gods as merely different forms of the appearance of a single great godhead. In this way we find Zeus, Helios, and Sarapis worshipped as a unity; similarly the images of the universal god, "Pantheos", heaped the characteristics of half a dozen gods on one figure; or else a single god, Jupiter, or Sarapis, or Silvanus, or even Priapus, was described as Pantheos. The idea is clearly expressed by Apuleius in describing what happened when he was permitted to see Isis:² "Lo I am here, called up by your prayers: mother of nature, ruler of all the elements, first-born of eternity, highest of the gods, queen of the departed, first of the heavenly beings, the single form of the gods and goddesses. The shining façade of the sky, the health-giving winds of the sea, the silence of the dead—all this do I govern by my nod. The whole circle of the earth worships my sole godhead under various forms, with changing customs and with many names: Phrygians as the mother of the gods, Athenians as Athena, Cypriots as Aphrodite, Cretans as Artemis-Dictynna, Sicilians as Persephone, Eleusinians as Demeter, others as Hera, or Bellona, or Hecate, or Nemesis. The Ethiopians, who are lighted by the rays of the rising sun,

¹ *Prosopogr. imp. Rom.* 2,225. n.

² Apuleius, *metam.*, 11,5. For the whole cf. H. Usener, *Götternamen*, p. 341-49. Roscher, *Myth. Lex.*, 3,1555

the Aryans, and the Egyptians who possess a most ancient wisdom, worship me with observances proper to me, and name me with my real name: Queen Isis." The fading religions of the ancient world were moving, under oriental leadership, towards the monotheism of a nature religion.

The oriental cults were brought to Rome by the masses of imported slaves and also by merchants and soldiers, and were there celebrated by societies composed of fellow countrymen.¹ They found patrons here and there in the leading circles and finally in the court; thereby their propagandist power was strengthened. These influences then streamed from Rome into the western provinces and were maintained at first by the same nationals as had brought them to Rome. Afterwards they seized on the indigenous population, this last, naturally, in very varied degrees.² The whole movement has been described in a masterly fashion³ and does not require to be depicted again here. It will be enough to sketch the religious development by giving a few examples.

If we travel from Rome to the port of Ostia, which has now been to a large extent excavated, we shall at once discover valuable data illuminating our problem. The old city god was Volcanus: his priest stood at the head of the spiritual aristocracy, and exercised a kind of oversight over all the sacred premises. His temple has not yet been discovered; the forum, which was laid out in Claudius's time, had first of all a "Capitol", i.e. a temple dedicated to the Capitoline triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva: as was appropriate in a "colony" that enjoyed Roman citizenship. Opposite lay a temple of Roma and Augustus, i.e. a fane for the worship of the emperor and the Empire. In a minor street behind the principal street, there were four other small temples dating from the last years of the republic. They may possibly be the temples of Venus, Fortuna, Ceres, and Spes, which were erected by a wealthy citizen named Gamala.⁴ In front of them stood a small temple

¹ G. La Piana, *Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire*, 1927 (from *Harvard Theol. Review*)

² Plentiful material in J. Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'empire romain*, vol. 2, Paris, 1911

³ F. Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*. Engl. trans., 1911

⁴ *CIL*, 14 n. 375 = Dessau, *inscr. lat.*, no. 6147, also O. Seeck, *Untergang*, 2, 15 6f. with note on pp. 523 f. Calza, *Ostia*, pp. 117 f.

of Jupiter, belonging to the first century. It is not known to whom the large temple was dedicated, which occupied the middle place in the Marine Exchange. Moreover, in the second century, we hear of the restoration of a temple of Castor and Pollux,¹ and with that our knowledge comes to an end about the temples of the ancient Roman gods. The colony, which was rebuilt by Claudius as a modern port, worshipped the new gods of the Empire, together with those of the orient.

Silvanus was the god of gardens and had no place amongst the great gods, but it is important to note that he was much worshipped in Ostia as a beneficent nature daemon; even in the Antonine period he was connected not only with the *lares* but also with Isis and Sarapis.² In the third century, a small chapel of Silvanus was decorated with wall paintings, and contained figures of the *lares* and of Isis, as well as Augustus, Fortuna, Liberalitas, and Alexander the Great.³ Hence it is indubitable that there was also a temple to the Egyptian gods, although it has not yet been discovered. On the other hand, a chapel to the Great Mother, Cybele, has been discovered on the city wall. A cult grotto of Sabazius lay quite close to the principal street; at least five temples were dedicated to Mithra, of which the earliest was built *circa* A.D. 140.⁴ The sacrifice of bulls and goats formed a constituent part in the cult of the Great Mother, and was conjoined with the blood bath of the one offering the sacrifice (taurobolium and kriobolium). This sacrifice was diligently observed in Ostia, from the days of Marcus Aurelius, "for the health of the emperor and the well-being of the whole imperial house";⁵ the same custom was observed in the western provinces. This fearful practice appears to have been brought there from the Roman site of the cult at the Vatican;⁶ and, in Rome itself, evidences have been discovered that it was practised to the end of the fourth century. No other eastern cult struck so firm a root in the whole of the west, or penetrated so deeply into all

¹ CIL. 14 n. 376

² CIL. 14, no. 20

³ Calza, *Ostia*, 19. 133 f.

⁴ Op. cit., pp. 119, 134, 165, 169 f., cf. the plans, p. 17. Sabazius, p. 92. Cybele, p. 168; datum: CIL. 14, no. 33. 67

⁵ CIL. 14, nos. 40–43, 4301–6

⁶ Dessau op. cit., no. 4131; Wissowa, op. cit., 322–25. Cumont, op. cit., 66 f.

strata of the population, as did the worship of Cybele, the Great Mother of the Mountain.¹

In the remainder of the west there are in general no cities which have been excavated to such an extent that we can gain a really comprehensive insight into the attitude taken up by their inhabitants towards religion. The discoveries made in western Asia Minor can only be rivalled in Northern Africa.

In A.D. 100, the commandants of the third legion,² which had been in Africa since the time of Augustus, settled a troop of veterans in Timgad. This place immediately became a highly developed military colony. It blossomed rapidly, and existed for hundreds of years, until it was destroyed in the sixth century.³ Three temples met the religious needs of the old soldiers, and the two largest of these buildings stood outside the city walls; even to-day the pillars of the Capitol rise impressively towards the sky. As in Ostia, the Capitol indicated the existence of a colony of citizens, and was dedicated to the triad Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. In A.D. 151, the temple of the genius of Timgad was built at the western gate, and its cultus was conjoined both with the worship of the triad of the Capitol and also with that of Bacchus, Silvanus, and Mars. The worship of city genii was particularly widespread in the provinces of Africa and Spain with their numerous towns.⁴ A special form of the conception of the genius occurred very frequently in the period of the Empire, a form under which it was customary to worship some nameless being as the divine protector of a place, a building, or an association. That was an early Roman custom, but at this late period it signified that religion had grown more pantheistic.

Among the soldiers of the third legion, a special form of worship was offered to Silvanus, although we do not know why this should be so. No wonder that the veterans of Timgad should have associated him with the genius of the city; and the same principle held good in regard to the worship of Mars, which was very usual amongst soldiers.⁵ Father Bacchus, or rather

¹ Toutain, *op. cit.*, 2,111–19

² Dessau, *op. cit.*, 6841. Ritterling, *Pauly-W.* 12,1493–1505

³ Plan and description in Baedeker, *Mittelmeer*, pp. 302–10. *CIL.* 8,2340–43. 10738–43. Suppl. 2, p. 1693, no. 17811; p. 1712, no. 17939

⁴ Toutain, *op. cit.*, 1,450 f.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, 1,253 262

"Liber", as he was now usually called, had many adherents in Africa, who paid him homage for the gift of wine. The adherents were drawn more from the local citizens than from the military.¹ In the case of Timgad, there is no means of deciding to what extent the Graeco-Roman god had become the heir of an indigenous Punic god of wine, although a similar assertion can be made definitely in regard to other places. The third temple of the little town stood in the market place behind the forum. The fact suggests that it served some official cult, but unfortunately no name is mentioned. The inscriptions introduce no important new characteristics into the picture. The old soldiers, with their successors and heirs, observed the official religion of the Empire, and worshipped such gods of the Roman heaven as tradition conveyed to them. Here and there it is possible that Punic religion exercised a slight influence, but it was of little significance in Timgad, where the atmosphere was Roman, indeed, more purely Roman than in Rome.

The circumstances were different in regard to Dougga. This once significant place lay to the south-west of Carthage, and had worked itself up from what was originally a Berber settlement to a Roman citizen-colony.² The elegant Capitol overlooked the forum; its pediment represented the heavenly ascension of the deified emperor, and, according to the dedicatory inscription, was built under Marcus Aurelius *circa* A.D. 168.³ The building was used for the official worship of the Roman triad. On the heights above the town, stood the magnificent temple of Saturn which, under Severus, in A.D. 195, took the place of an earlier temple.⁴ Although this Saturn was worshipped in both temples, he was not a Roman god, but the Punic Baal.¹ His consort, the Dea Caelestis, i.e. Tanit the queen of heaven,⁵ had her temple to the west, where it is still to be found slumbering among the olives, in a good state of preservation, and surrounded by a semi-orbicular wall of gleaming marble. This building also dates from the time of the African dynasty, having been erected under Alexander Severus,

¹ *Op. cit.*, 1,361-4

² Baedeker, *op. cit.*, 371-73; Cagnat, *Carthage, Timgad Tebessa*, 3rd edit., p. 67 gives a plan

³ *CIL*. 8,1471 = *Suppl.* 1, no. 15513

⁴ *Op. cit.*, 8, suppl. 4, no. 26498

⁵ Toutain, *op. cit.*, 3,15 ff.

i.e. c. A.D. 230.¹ There can be no doubt in this case, however, but that it replaced an earlier temple. The great African divine couple Baal and Tanit drew to themselves for centuries all the religious feelings of the inhabitants of Dougga. Finally, there was a temple of Mercury complete with two inner rooms, a pillared hall, and apses; inscriptions say, indeed, that the site for the temple of Mercury was presented by the city.² Even this god was not Roman, but an indigenous being whose cult was practiced in the small, African country towns round about—but unfortunately it has been as yet impossible to discover the god's name.³

Timgad and Dougga were representatives of two opposed types of religious life, their common feature being the almost⁴ complete lack of anything imported from the orient. In a certain sense, this is characteristic of the African provinces in general. The autochthonous religions met the needs of the native population even as late as the time of the Empire, and, in Latin transformation, they adapted themselves to the higher culture of the period. Only the mysteries of the Great Mother, together with the taurobolium, were adopted and diligently practised among the citizens.⁵ The other eastern cults, i.e. the worship of Egyptian and Syrian gods, had sites in the great garrisons, especially in Lambaesis.⁶ Soldiers of all ranks, and provincial officials who followed them, were the people mainly responsible for furthering the religion of Mithra, but, alongside them, oriental slaves effectively proclaimed the new faith, and this even penetrated Africa after the end of the second century.⁷

We do not gain the same impression from the memorials and inscriptions found on the Germanic frontier provinces on the Rhine.⁸ Here Roman soldiers of Italian origin met with

¹ *CIL.* 8, suppl. 4, nos. 26457–26463

² *Loc. cit.*, 26478–26482

³ Toutain, *op. cit.*, 1,299–307

⁴ A Mithraic Dadophor has been found in Timgad (Toutain, 2,147, n. 1), and there is evidence of a Dendrophor in Dougga, *CIL.*, 8, suppl. 1, no. 15527

⁵ Toutain, 2,101 ff. Taurobolium and kriobolium: Dessau, *inscr. lat.*, 4136.

⁶ 2,142

⁶ Toutain, 2,18 ff. 56 ff.

⁷ Toutain, 2,146 ff. 163 ff.; cf. the chart in Cumont, *Mysterien des Mithra*, 2nd edit., 1911

⁸ H. Lehner, *Mysterien Kulte im römischen Rheinland*, Bonner Jahrb., 129 (1924), pp. 36–91

others from different provinces of the empire; orientals came into the country, mostly as soldiers, but in isolated cases as merchants or slaves. The provinces themselves reflected their varied history in the jumble of the population which consisted of Celtic, Gallic, and Germanic elements. The varied character of the religion corresponded to this miscellany of people. In the great garrisons, the official worship of the Roman gods and the emperor took the first place, but, in addition and certainly much more vitally operative in the hearts of the populace, was the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus, and especially Mithra, both of whom, in the second and third centuries, were genuinely popular amongst the soldiers.

The native population served their ancestral gods, built temples, and erected sacred statues inscribed in Latin with a corresponding transformation of the divine names—as Cæsar and Tacitus inform us.¹ It follows that when we find the names of Mercury, Mars, or Hercules, we know that Roman appellations have been given to Celtic or Germanic gods; indeed, not infrequently, the identity is made explicit by an additional name.² Side by side with these high gods, there was a host of gods of a lower status, or even only local worship, for whom there was no corresponding Roman label. These are recorded under their real names, e.g. Rosmerta, Visuna, Abnoba, and sometimes as statues. This was particularly the case with Epona the guardian of horses, riding sideways on her steed, or the three “matrons” with their immense hoods and baskets of fruit in their laps; also the water-god, Tarvos, in the form of an animal, or Esus, the god of business, who felled trees.

In Altbachtal near Trèves there has lately been excavated a temple space which enables us to read the local religious history of the half-Roman and half-Germanic capital from the first, to within the fourth, century, for here are the remains of more than thirty temples.³ Everything is either Celtic or Germanic—but once on a day a certain Martius Martialis built a large house in the midst of these temples, and also erected a Mithraeum for the private devotions of himself and

¹ Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.*, 6, 17. Tacitus, *Germ.*, 9.

² Wissowa in *Arch. f. Religionswiss.* 19, 8 ff. Material has been collected by A. Riese, *Das rheinische Germanien in den antiken Inschriften*, pp. 289–366.

³ S. Loeschcke, *Die Erforschung des Tempelbezirks im Altbachtale zu Trier* 1928.

his friends; and this was certainly not the only one in Trèves.¹ The cult of Mithra in Germany was not confined to the troops on the frontier, but had adherents in the native population in the middle of the country. In these regions, moreover, worship was frequently offered to the Egyptian gods and homage was paid to the Great Mother of Phrygia, together with the practice of the taurobolium.² Again, numerous stones to the diurnal gods, with representations of the seven planets, show that oriental astrology was not lacking. With progressive Romanization, the educated classes of the population adopted many elements of the religions practised in the eastern civilizations of the Empire, and passed them on to other classes.

The common feature of all these oriental cults was that they had overflowed their original national limits, and tended towards universalism. Most of them took on the form of mystery cults, the meetings and doctrines being strictly reserved for converts and initiates.³ The myth of the death and resurrection of Osiris was the centre of the mysteries of Isis, round which were grouped numerous rites of an Egyptian and would-be Egyptian character. The anniversary of the death of Osiris was celebrated at the end of October; the weeping congregation cried aloud, and accompanied the high goddess when she searched in despair. In the end, the corpse was found in separate pieces, the parts were reunited, and the happy multitude greeted the re-vivified god with frenzied exultation—he was the guarantor of immortality for each individual among his believers.

Those who wished to enter into this holy fellowship had to submit to a long technical preparation, and undergo a ceremony of dedication. As Apuleius⁴ himself tells confidentially, the ceremony brought the candidate to the boundary of the kingdom of the dead, and let him tread upon Proserpine's threshold, finally bringing him back past all the elements. "In the middle of the night I saw the sun sending forth a blinding light, I visited the gods in hell and heaven, and prayed to them face to face." The mystes, or initiate, suffered

¹ Lehner, *op. cit.*, 87, nos. 263–67

² *CIL.* 13, no. 11352. Riese, *Rhein. Germ.*, p. 457, no. 3068b

³ Cf. Vol. 1, pp. 168 ff.

⁴ Apuleius, *Metam.*, 11,23 f.

death in order to return from the kingdom of the dead, guarded by the power of Isis; revitalized in this way, he was made into an immortal god by virtue of having seen god. Clothed in a heavenly garment, his head surrounded by a nimbus, the new initiate showed himself to the congregation in the form of the sun-god.

The mythical content of the principal feast of Cybele, the Great Mother of the Mountain, was sorrow for the death, and joy for the resurrection of the god: on the "day of blood" the mystics practised a whirling dance which put them into a mazed condition, and, staggering without control of the senses, they cut themselves until the blood flowed; or else in a state of complete ecstasy they copied Attis and emasculated themselves; afterwards, the blood spurted at least out of the gashed arms of the dancing priests. But the day of mourning was followed at once by the glad festival of the "Hilaria", on March 25, when the coming of spring was celebrated as the resurrection of Attis.¹ In this religion also, an initiation of a special kind was developed, evidences of which are numerous after the middle of the second century, and which was found here and there, from Rome to the western provinces of the Empire. A ceremonial sacrifice of bulls and goats is described as a taurobolium and kriobolium, and was customarily offered as a solemn part of the cultus "for the health of the Emperor". Certainly in the third century, perhaps even at its beginning, there was associated with this ceremony a blood bath of the one who made the offering. The man was concealed in a hole in the ground beneath the animal, and the blood was allowed to flow over him; afterwards he was greeted by the believers with prayers of homage.² By this baptism, he was believed to have been "born again"—in one passage it says "forever"—but elsewhere we read of the repetition of the blood bath after twenty or perhaps twenty-eight years.³ The ceremony was certainly not the normal mode of initiating new converts, if only because bulls were too dear, but a special act on the part of eminent members on special occasions.

¹ Marquardt, *Röm. Staatsverw.*, 3 (2nd edit.), 372 f. and Wissowa, *op. cit.*, 320 ff.

² Description in Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, 10, 1011–1050

³ Dessau, *op. cit.*, 4152, 4154. cf. 4150 and Lagrange in *Revue biblique*, 36, 561–6. Wissowa, *op. cit.*, 322 ff.

The cult of Mithra, the Persian god of light, was apparently confined to males; in the course of the second century it extended vastly in the west of the Empire, though in a form compounded of various elements very well adapted for missionary purposes; the soldiers carried it in every direction. Its importance increased further in the third century. It seized even non-military sections of the population, and, in the end, was further promoted by being united with the official worship of the sun. Worship of Mithra gripped the hearts of the people most strongly, perhaps because it exemplified in broadest fashion the quality of a mystery cult.¹ The separate congregations did not consist of many members: all the temples were small rooms in which a hundred men would scarcely find accommodation. In this way a close fellowship of comrades might be built up, amongst whom nevertheless the usual military differences of rank persisted. The holy band was divided into seven grades, and a man passed from one to the other only after severe tests which demanded self-control and fearlessness. We read of baptisms and of holy meals amongst the members of the cult; of immortality, and of heavenly reward; and also of Mithra's moral commandments which had an ascetic character.² It is clear that an initiate of Mithra was to be a warrior for the god of light, of purity, and of truth, against the kingdom of darkness and falsehood. A strong masculine morality was built on the Persian dualism;³ it was probably apt to win soldiers' hearts, and to give a firm foothold to their contemporaries who were restless with uncertainty at a time of cultural crisis. This religion, however, was not burdened with philosophical hair-splitting. It spread in ever wider circles in Greece and Asia Minor, finally bringing destruction on itself, for it was in these very regions that Christianity first began to spread.

About this time, Judaism began gradually to lose significance. The people themselves had done nothing to preserve the memory of their own experiences, and other historians ceased to trouble much about Israel. The long series of Jewish

¹ Cumont, *Or. Relig.*, 142 ff.; *Myst. d. Mithra*, 125 ff.

² Justin, *Apol.*, 66,4. Tert., *Praescr. haer.*, 40. Porphyrius, *de abstin.*, 4,16. Julian, *Cesares*, near the end

³ Cumont, *Or. Relig.*, 135 ff.

insurrections under Trajan and Hadrian,¹ with their dreadful barbarities, were expiated even more terribly, and the total of oriental Jews was catastrophically diminished. Many "tens of thousands" were slaughtered in punitive expeditions,² and a Roman historian gives the actual figures. Hadrian's war destroyed in Judea, apart from Jerusalem, fifty fortified places and 985 villages; 580,000 Jews fell in battle, and there were immeasurable losses through famine, illness, and fire. The figures are remarkably precise, and perhaps come from an official report of the war: this does not mean that they are literally correct, but they do give an idea of the impression which the public mind received of the course of the war. Whole provinces, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Libya, and Cyprus, were, in fact, emptied of Jewish population.

The insurrection under Hadrian was occasioned by a general prohibition of circumcision.³ This was so intolerable for the Jews that, even under Antoninus Pius, they again rebelled, and were eventually successful in obtaining permission once more to observe this religious rite. On the other hand, circumcision of non-Jews was once more prohibited with very severe penalties.⁴ This law became permanent as it made proselytization impossible in practice, and thus the Jewish missionary activity was suppressed. Of course, one person continued to influence another, and we hear for centuries of a quiet Jewish propaganda: but the time of great accessions, and the hope of a religious conquest of the world, were passed. Instead, Judaism exercised an increasing influence on the syncretistic religions, affecting, in particular, mysticism and magic. The Hermetic writings, of which we shall have to speak in the sequel,⁵ are as strongly marked by Judaistic influences as are the magical papyri and the magic gems. In this sphere one can follow esoteric Jewish Wisdom step by step.

The position of the Jews, in the eyes of public law, was not changed in spite of bloody insurrections; and when Caracalla gave Roman citizenship to the whole Empire, Jews were included.⁶ Even the religious central organization, which the

¹ *Supra*, p. 17

² Euseb., *H.E.*, 4,2,4

³ Spartian, *Hadr.*, 14,2

⁴ Julius Capitol, *Ant. Pius*, 5,4. Modestinus in the *Digests*, 48,8,11 p.r.

⁵ Vol. 3, chap. 1

⁶ Juster, *Les Juifs*, 2,23

people had founded after the destruction of Jerusalem, was recognized. The "patriarch" was the leader of Jewish life, and, by means of his "apostles", gathered a special tax from the Jews—the earlier Temple tax was now paid into the Roman state treasury—and he exercised authority in Palestine to the extent that even his death penalties were upheld.¹ Naturally, the Sanhedrin in its old form had disappeared. In its place there was a kind of rabbinic academy in Jabneh, and later in Tiberias, as a superior court of theology and law.² We are now entering into the period when the tradition of the Law became fixed in writing in the form known as the "Mishna", and so afforded the normative basis for the further development of oriental Judaism. Further developments took place on this basis in Tiberias in the third and fourth centuries; what is known as the Palestinian Talmud bears witness to the results. Meanwhile the centre of gravity of Judaism had moved eastwards, and in the fifth century the Jews of Babylon put together the writings which were to be normative for the future, and which were known as the Babylon Talmud after the place of origin. On the whole, as Hellenistic Jews declined in numbers and influence in the Roman empire, Judaism of a purely oriental stamp increased in power, and finally came to exercise sole control among the people.

The latest excavations at Dura, a fortress on the Euphrates, have thrown much light on the circumstances during this intermediate period. Here, beyond the frontiers of the Empire, but in close association with Palmyra on the one hand, and with Parthia and Persia on the other, there was a wealthy Jewish colony possessing a definite life of its own, and speaking Aramaic, Parthic, and Greek. The colony followed its own devices in regard to the legal prescriptions against making pictorial representations of living things, and the walls of their synagogue were painted by good artists, from top to bottom, with a series of representations of Biblical history. These included the destruction of the statue of Dagon in the Philistine temple, and the carrying off of the ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 5, 6);³ but, instead of Dagon, there lay on the ground

¹ Origen, *Epist. ad Afric.*, 14 (17,44 f. Lo.)

² Schürer, *Gesch.*, 2,247. Juster, *op. cit.*, 1,401

³ *Illustrated London News*, 1933, July 29, p. 190

the fragments of the principal Palmyrene gods worshipped in Dura. This community of Jews felt itself to stand heavens high above its surroundings; and, as yet, it had not adopted the type of thought found in the Talmud. Israel's future, however, was decided. She separated finally from the spirit of Hellenism just about the same time as Christianity became indivisibly wedded to it.

Chapter Two

THE CHURCH

STORY-WRITING IS A VERY ANCIENT ART, BUT THE GREEKS were the first to write history. Herodotus described the heroic struggles of the Persian wars out of which blossomed the might and glory of the Periclean age in which he lived; he did so because he understood those wars as the final, crucial phase of an ancient struggle between the “barbarian” peoples of the orient and the Greeks; for this reason he spread out the panorama of the whole history of this mighty event. As a consequence, he regarded the very great variety of individual events as a series governed by a single idea, events which meant the expiry of an authority controlling the entire orient. He also inquired after the laws which at bottom shaped history and gave it significance; he found his answer in religion. But his faith in the gods had already broken, and so was unable to give him a unified point of view:¹ he tells us of guilt and expiation, of the victory of right over wrong, but also of the gods’ envy, the inevitable oscillation between happiness and unhappiness, and, finally, the “necessity” which even the gods cannot change. All this makes history comprehensible only within certain bounds; in the last analysis, it is a tragic enigma, just like the lot of many an individual in the course of his life.

Thucydides liberated the writing of history from theological considerations, limited it to the present world of experience and its presuppositions, and thereby gave it a scientific character; at the same time, he defined its material bounds quite strictly, and prevented it from running off into a series of disconnected sketches. For a long time after him, no one had the temerity to write history: the comprehensive work of Ephoros, which was completed before Alexander the Great commenced his reign, was nothing more than a collection of materials without a governing idea.²

¹ Wiliamowitz, *Glaube der Hellenen*, 2,206. Jacoby in Pauly-W., supplement 2,479–483

² E. Schwartz in Pauly-W, 6,7 f.

Polybius was the first to re-establish large-scale, historical research when he began his masterly history of Rome. He raised the question of how it came about that, in the fifty-three years between 220 B.C. and 168 B.C., almost the entire world fell under the lordship of Rome. History could show no parallel; all the earlier dynasties, Persian, Lacedæmonian, Macedonian, had only effected a temporary and partial rule; the Romans alone gained possession of most of the inhabited world, thus achieving what could not be surpassed in the future. Before 200 B.C. there were only separate histories; but, from this period in time, history became an organic growth which spanned the world and drove it towards one and the same goal.¹ This means neither more nor less than that Polybius had clearly recognized the immense significance of events within his own experience, and saw, in the Roman empire, the climax of a whole process of evolution: in this opinion he was right for the next six centuries—in a certain sense, indeed, for 2,000 years. For Polybius, history began in 200 B.C. Having a strictly matter-of-fact turn of mind, he looked for driving forces among known causes in the present world, and made no sorties into regions not subject to examination: except that, in the proper place, he made due allowance for the irrational fact of Tyche, which, in his case, meant "accident".

Diodorus was the next to write a universal history at the beginning of the Roman empire; but his spirit was not scientific and his object was only to provide the public with a handy book of reference, in which they could conveniently find what was worth knowing about all periods and peoples. This had nothing to do with history in the proper sense, but, even to writers of this kind, it was clear that the Roman empire summed up history.

The Israelitish people had received far-reaching practical instruction in history at the hands of Syrians and Assyrians, Egyptians and Babylonians, and this so frequently that their eyes were accustomed to look towards the far horizon, and to take in a broad landscape. Moreover, the religious foundation of their thought moved them at an early date to an interpretation of history which started from a conception of God.

¹ Polyb., *Hist.*, I, 1-4

God had chosen Israel alone for Himself from amongst all the peoples of the earth, in order that they might be a means of blessing for the whole world. No matter how war and exile might even yet chastise the people with distress and suffering, nevertheless the day would come when Israel would bring the true knowledge of God, and hence salvation, to all peoples. Then would God establish His glory in Zion, and all the world would make a pilgrimage to His holy mountain in order to worship there. There were many variations of the hope that this kingdom of God would signify the political subjection of all nations under Israel. From that point, the road led to the apocalyptic conception of the miraculous Messianic kingdom of peace, a conception which, from the days of Isaiah,¹ ever and again enflamed the religious imagination of the prophets.

About the same time as Polybius came to his conception of history as centring on Rome, Daniel presented his revelations to the Jewish people during the Maccabean wars: here, in two passages, chapter two and chapter seven, he laid bare the meaning of history. The empires of Babylon, Media, Persia, and Macedonia followed one another: this last, i.e. Alexander's empire, was already crumbling, would soon fall to pieces, and be replaced by a new empire that God Himself would establish. In this empire, the Son of Man sent from heaven, who, in this case, was only a symbol of a nation consisting of the saints of the Most High, would rule the entire world forever.² It would therefore appear that the history of the world issued according to divine plan in the Messianic kingdom of God, as Isaiah has already prophesied. We have already seen how this idea developed in late Judaism, and we have described its various forms.³ In the Maccabean period, hopes were re-confirmed that all earthly powers would be transformed by a great miracle, and, under the oppression of Roman rule, those hopes grew and supplied the inner power in various rebellions, until the catastrophe of the year A.D. 70, and the final desperate struggle which Barkochba fought in Hadrian's time.

The Christian church entered into the heritage of Jewish eschatology, and from apocalypticism learned to regard the

¹ Cf. Isa. 11: 6-9

³ Vol. I, pp. 28, 37 f.

² Dan. 2: 44, 7: 13, 18, 27; cf. Vol. I, pp. 28 f.

history of the world as the way of approach to the kingdom of God. The Revelation of John shows how a Christian seer regarded the end of the present world and the glory of the new kingdom, after all Rome's glory and might had broken to pieces, following upon certain fearful signs of the divine anger, and after Satan had been bound and flung into the abyss. A new heaven and a new earth would then be erected upon the ruins of the world, and the heavenly Jerusalem would shine as the capital of a holy people, subject to God and the Lamb, and walking in His light for ever and ever.

There were, of course, a thousand variations; but, in this way, or something like it, the earliest Christians conceived the course of the world's history. Fixed and firm, and far removed from any doubt, was, to them, the fact that the great empires of this world, including the Imperium Romanum, had reached their last and highest form. Now catastrophe threatened the latter, and its place would be taken by the promised kingdom of God, and introduced by the second advent of Christ. The dynasties of the Roman emperors would be brought to an end by Christ, the King of kings. He and His kingdom constituted the goal and the final meaning of history.

All of this had been prophesied from ancient times, and described in the Old Testament; and the promises applied, as Paul had shown,¹ not to the Jews, but to the "spiritual Israel", i.e. the Christians. The young, religious society, the Church, had an astonishingly clear consciousness of its own significance as a completely new element that had entered history, and had destroyed the old criteria. The national limitation of former religions did not operate among Christians. A new people² were coming forward who could no longer be called Jewish, Greek, Scythian, or barbarian,³ but were indeed altogether new, "a third race" at the side of Gentiles and Jews,⁴ "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession".⁵ All the peoples who had

¹ Gal. 3: 6-9, 6: 16; Rom. 4: 1-25; Phil. 3: 3; cf. Vol. I, 127 f.

² Barn. 5,7. 7,5. *Or. Sibyll.* I,383; cf. Harnack, *Mission*, 4th edit., I,262 ff.

³ Col. 3: 11; Gal. 3: 28; cf. Rom. 10: 12. 1 Cor. 12: 13

⁴ *Kerygma Petri*, f. 2. p. 15,8. Klostermann, 2nd edit. (*Kl. Texte* 3). Aristides, *Apol.*, 2. Harnack, *op. cit.*, I,259-289

⁵ Pet. 2: 9

appeared in the world hitherto, were conditioned by flesh and blood, and possessed their own peculiar qualities; Christian people alone were born of the spirit, by the sacrament of baptism in particular. This sacrament united Christians chosen out of all nations, and made them into a new, supramundane organism which Paul described as the body of Christ, and of which, therefore, Christ was the head.¹

From an early date this body of Christians, united into one in Christ through the spirit, was called *ecclesia*, church. This was the name used by preference in the Septuagint for the assembly of the children of Israel. When the Christians applied this title to their own society, they expressed thereby their consciousness of being the chosen people of God, the people in the Old Testament who had received the promises; they believed themselves to be the spiritual Israel. The sum total of Christian people, who lived in many places in the earth, was called *ecclesia*; every single church, however, was also called by the same name: for where two or three were gathered in the name of the Lord, there was he in their midst, there the body of Christ was visible, there was the "Church".

The author of *1 Clement* used stiff and formal phraseology, —itself valuable source-material. He began with the words:² "The church of God which sojourns in Rome greets the church of God which sojourns in Corinth." The one church of God dwelt on earth as a diaspora; she had been scattered "to all the four winds", and to the ends of the world.³ She only sojourned on earth, a stranger, because "our home, in which we have citizen rights, is in heaven"; Christians were fellow-citizens of the saints above, and belonged to the household of God.⁴ The real home of Christians was the heavenly Jerusalem, in which the living God ruled eternally in the midst of unnumbered angelic hosts, and the Church of the elect and the righteous.⁵ The future city towards which we were striving lay there, the "kingdom of God" that united the church scattered over the earth.⁶

¹ Cor. 12: 13, 10: 17; Rom. 12: 5; Col. 1: 18, 24; Eph. 2: 11–19, 5: 23; 1 Pet. 2: 5. *Herm. Vis.* 3,3,3–5; cf. Vol. I, 119 ff., 214 ff.

² *1 Clem.* 1 title; cf. *Pol.*, *ad Phil.*, title, *Mart. Pol.* title

³ *Didache* 10,5, 9,4; cf. Jas. 1: 1

⁴ Phil. 3: 20; Eph. 2: 19; cf. 1. Pet. 1: 1, 2: 11. *Herm. Sim.* 1,1

⁵ Heb. 12: 22–24; Rev. 21: 9 f.; cf. 19: 7

⁶ Heb. 13: 4; *Did. 4,4* 10,5; R. Frick, *Gesch. d. Reich-Gottes-Gedankens*, 29 ff.

The *ecclesia* is not the sum of the single communities on earth, but a supra-mundane entity comprising everything that belongs to Christ, and is, indeed, an organ of his body which comprises the high angels and the serving spirits, the saints who have been already perfected, martyrs and confessors, and the Christians who are still striving and struggling here below.¹ Christ loves the Church as his bride; she is His wife, one with Him, like man and wife according to the Scriptures: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden show forth the relation of Christ to the Church. Christ's spirit, *pneuma*, is spiritual and eternal, and so, too, is the Church: she was created by God before the whole world, before the sun and moon.² Thus the Church is the origin and goal of all earthly phenomena; but this does not mean that she exists in this world, and, still less, by this world; rather, the world was created for her sake and has no independent purpose. The Church has her own organism and her own laws; the world has other laws: both stand over against each other as two fundamentally different states.³ The idea of an antithesis between the divine and the earthly state, to which Augustine's most important work gave classical expression, belongs to the original essence of Christian self-consciousness within the Church.

Any cool observer who will consider the lack of proportion between the immensity of the Imperium Romanum, indeed of the whole world throughout six millennia, on the one hand, and the small, scattered, minor community which made up Christianity, on the other; and let it come home vividly to his mind that this handful of people set themselves, aloof and proud, over against the Roman empire, and asserted that the entire history of the world ran its course for their sakes—he will be in a position to understand the criticisms made by Celsus, who was a Greek.⁴ Celsus speaks indignantly of these “worms” who assert that “they came directly after God, and had become fully like Him; that all was subject to them, earth, and water,

¹ Cf. Col. 2,9–12. 19; and *supra*, p. 52, note 5

² Eph. 5: 29–32; 2 Clem. 14: 1–5; cf. Ign., *ad. Pol.*, 5,1. *ad. Eph.* 5: 1. Rev. 19:7, 21: 9, 22: 17; Mark 2: 19 = Matt. 25: 1–13. John 3: 29; 2 Cor. 11: 2; pre-existence: 2 Clem. 14: 1; *Herm. Vis.* 1,3,4. 2,4,1

³ *Herm. Vis.* 1,1,6. 2,4,1. *Sim.* 1,1–5

⁴ Celsus in Orig., *c. Cels.*, 4,23

and air, and stars; and that everything existed,¹ and had been ordained, for the purpose of serving them". Celsus was quite right; that was the way in which only fanatics would speak, and Christians were commonly "fools". Sometimes, however, although very, very rarely, a fanatic is a genius, and a fanatical community the vehicle of a world-conquering power. In such a case, the historian's reckoning, which depends upon analogy, ceases to be valid. Without knowing it, he is really looking straight through the levels of normal events into the abyss from which those final powers spring that cannot be comprehended on the basis of rational knowledge. In a case like this, faith rightly speaks of miracle.

The essence of the church is the spirit. In discussing the earliest periods, we have already seen how the pneuma made itself known among the Christians, and now we need only to remark, for the sake of completeness, that the enthusiastic operations of the spirit, so vividly portrayed by Paul, showed themselves powerful even in the second century. Missionaries still wandered through the various countries, and the voice of the prophets was to be heard offering prayer and thanks, but also exhorting, giving revelations, and uttering prophecies in the assembly rooms of Christian congregations, sometimes no doubt also in the open air in the squares and streets. The spiritual office won great respect, honour, and outer advantage, for those who possessed it. This fact, on occasion, attracted very unspiritual elements, and brought about deceitful conduct. As early as the Church Order recorded in the *Didache*,² we find directions for testing the prophets who possessed the spirit: if their enthusiastic speeches ended in demanding good food, or money, by way of reward, the church was to cast them out as deceivers.

A pagan writer, of the time of the Antonines,³ sketched an obviously faithful picture of such an adventurer. After various failures in different spheres of life, he became a Christian and set up as a prophet; he conducted public worship, expounded the Bible, wrote his own tracts, and was greatly respected in the churches. In the end, however, he was thrown into prison, a

¹ Cf. say Justin, *Ap.* 7,1. Aristides, *Apol.*, 16,6
³ Lucian, *de morte Peregrini*, 11-16

² *Did.* 11,7-12

fact which served further to increase his prestige, and ensured his livelihood after being set free—until he was caught in an offence against the customs of church worship, an offence which immediately brought his prophetic status to an ignoble end.

A few years later, another enemy of Christians, the Celsus¹ whom we have already mentioned, tells us of his own experiences of Christian prophets whom he had heard, as he assures us, in Phoenicia and Syria. They busied themselves in large numbers, inside and outside the temples; visited, and begged in, the cities and camps; and preached as follows: "I am God, or the Son of God, or the Holy Ghost. I am coming. The world is passing away, and you people are going to destruction on account of your sins. I will save you. You will see me returning with heavenly power. Blessed is he who now serves me; but on all the others I will cause eternal fire to rain down on the cities and the countryside. It will be useless for mankind, unaware of its due punishments, to repent and groan; but those who believe on me will I preserve for ever." These observations are made by Celsus in a hostile spirit, but they are keen-sighted: actually the spirit of Jesus Himself was speaking in the prophet in the first person singular, proclaiming the parousia, and frightening citizens with terrible threats. When Celsus adds that the speech ran out into incomprehensible and crazy sounds, which conveyed no meaning, and which were, nevertheless, expounded by a man who could only have been a fraud, the case was obviously an example of the familiar glossolalia with subsequent interpretation.² No one can be surprised if Celsus took it all for deception, and if he believed that he was justified in this opinion by the confessions of such prophets; even Christians themselves were not certain what attitude to adopt in regard to deceivers of that kind. Taken on the whole, however, Celsus has given us a true picture of a genuine, pneumatic ecstatic. Of course, it should be added that the classical period of Christian prophecy had already passed, and what Celsus had seen were small fry on the geographical and spiritual periphery of the Church, men who were living on the remains of the prestige of characteristics which were dying out.

¹ Origen 7,9-11

² Vol. I, pp. 125 f.

For a long time the normative sections of the church had been more than mistrustful of all spiritual phenomena of this kind, and people such as these were closely examined to see if they observed a manner of life which corresponded to the commandments of the Lord.¹ The Pauline epistles expressly pointed out the way which all forms of pneumatic activity should take, and that way lay in the direction of giving expression to the Christian virtues; moreover, Paul's canticle of the love which remained when all prophecy and glossolalia had passed away, was not forgotten. The moral principles and habits, taken over from the proselytes of the synagogue, exercised a similar effect. So, too, the words of the Sermon on the Mount found their way ever afresh to the hearts of the faithful, and shaped their conceptions of the Christian life. The opening chapters of the *Didache* show how the words of the Lord combined into a unity with the Old Testament commandments, and we have every ground for assuming that the way of life of the great majority of Christians was governed by these teachings. The pneumatics had to walk on this level, a fact that damped considerably their arbitrary ways, and also gave protection against the fundamental moral libertinism which, in many gnostic circles, was the consequence of pneumatic endowment.²

The pneumatics were also vehicles of revelation; their words were identified as those of the same divine spirit as formerly had spoken in the prophets of the Old Covenant, and as had become flesh in Jesus Christ. This identity gave the pneumatics the same ultimate authority. But how could one prove that the spirit speaking in any particular prophet was really divine and not the voice of an evil and misleading spirit? The revelations could have been tested by the Old Testament—if only the allegorical method had not permitted every inconvenient phrase to be readily explained away, or perverted to give any required meaning. The question might be asked whether the Pauline epistles were not a touchstone, and the answer would be that pneumatics of the grand style believed themselves to possess an authority equal to Paul's own. What could be said, however, about the words of the Lord? These undoubtedly

¹ *Did.* 11,8, 10

² e.g. Vol. I, p. 285

enjoyed unconditional authority, but even they were sometimes explained allegorically. But, of even greater importance was the fact that, from the secret darkness of gnostic information there came forth, ever afresh, words of the Lord and secret revelations of the Master to trusted disciples—words which, it is true, the majority of the Church were unfamiliar with, but which in case of necessity could be quoted and used in support of strange prophetic revelations. There was no definite criterion that separated genuine from false, or that could make plain the truth, or the lie, in a pneumatic's mouth.

Even in the early period, the Church suffered not a little from this uncertainty, a fact which kept the door open to all sorts of strange speculations: the later epistles of the New Testament give us a reflection of the earliest struggles against various heresies. At length gnosis bloomed out into full glamour, and reached its greatest influence. Valentine, as well as a thousand others with similar ideas, proclaimed the superiority of a pneumatic, who had received gnostic illumination, as contrasted with the Church's commonplace writings which thought and spoke on the level of everyday life, and were bound to traditions and literal forms.¹ When this happened the Church was in very great danger, and was compelled to take effective measures of self-protection if her unity and purity were not to fade into a mere ideal. The danger of dissolution into conventicles of a more or less syncretistic character was never greater than in the second century, when wide areas of the orient were under the influence of a gnosis then pressing forward victoriously.

The Church prepared a three-fold defence against the pneumatic and gnostic danger. She fixed the sources of the normative tradition in the canon of Scripture, laid the foundations of theological teaching in the Creed, and especially did she set the ecclesiastical office of the bishop as a higher authority than that due to the unbridled exercise of pneumatic gifts. Thus it came about that, not merely books and doctrines, but living guardians, faced living antagonists. The battle was fought out man against man, and, in the end, that was the most important factor.

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 291 f.

Towards the end of the first century, the offices of bishop and deacon, which were originally of a purely technical nature,¹ were described by a Roman writer as the Christian counterpart of the Old Testament priests, and traced back to apostolic institution. The bishops were already portrayed as the appointed leaders of the cultus. They offered a blameless and holy sacrifice.² This completed the transition which is hinted at in the Church Order of the *Didache*.³ In particular, side by side with the gradual decline of the pneumatic functions, the bishops and deacons added to their previous functions that of leading public worship as priests; thereby, in fact, they united in themselves the entire leadership of the Church.

Shortly afterwards, Ignatius of Antioch wrote about the monarchical episcopacy;⁴ he praised and recommended it highly, and knowing it as it existed in Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Smyrna; Rome and Philippi, however, had not yet adopted this form of leadership. In Philippi, a college of presbyters and deacons stood at the head of the church,⁵ and the case seems to have been similar in Rome.

It is many decades since scholars first began to advance theories to explain the rise of the monarchical episcopacy from an original college of church leaders. The only clear fact, however, is that, by about the end of the first century, in Antioch and certain of the larger cities of Asia Minor, leadership was no longer in the hands of several persons, but full authority had been transferred to a single bishop. The college of presbyters had become an advisory council subject to him; the deacons still consisted of several persons who, on account of their duties in distributing the charities of the church, were in particularly close contact with the person of the bishop. If we inquire for the reason of the change, the simplest answer would probably be the most appropriate: it was recognized that in difficult times—and a state of war now existed against gnosticism—the concentration of power in the hands of a single person offered the surest guarantee of good leadership; the policy of the Church was shaped accordingly.⁶ Results showed

¹ Vol. I, pp. 143–146. 192–95

² 1 Clem. 44: 4

³ Did. 15,1 f.

⁴ Vol. I, pp. 247 f.

⁵ Pol. ad. Phil., 5,3. 6,1

⁶ W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit u. Ketzerei*, pp. 65–74

the wisdom of the step in other respects, and hence the monarchical episcopacy spread gradually throughout the whole Church; in a later time, we find, here and there, a double episcopacy as a noteworthy remnant of a past age.¹ There is also the possibility that liturgical requirements had suggested the idea of a single bishop after the centralization of public worship in a single church for all the members² in contrast to the house by house meetings for prayer.

According to Ignatius, who was the first to discuss the problem, the bishop was the leader of an individual church; he was not merely high-priest and leader, but, more than anything else, the authority on doctrine: he stood before the church in the place of God, and must be respected like the Lord himself. Anyone whose knowledge pretended to go beyond the limits set by the bishop was lost.³ In other words, the official pneumatic, in the person of the bishop, was now distinguished from the earlier prophet who had held no regular office; the bishop united in himself all authority, and gave a final decision on all disputed questions. In the early period each separate church could describe itself as an *ecclesia*, i.e. God's chosen people, because God's people were always present where the spirit bore sway: we now find this thought developed with very important consequences. The spirit no longer held free sway, nor seized first one and then another. Of course, individual members possessed it from the time of their baptism, and this fact united them in the one body of Christ. The spirit revealed himself now, however, in a special manner; not as formerly in prophets and those who spoke with tongues, but in the bishop and the clergy whom the bishop led: the bishop was the head of this spiritual body. In this way, from the saying "the Church is where the spirit is", the struggle with gnosticism led to the new thesis: "the Church is where the bishop is." This thesis triumphed over enthusiasm and gnosticism, and has remained the fundamental dogma of Roman Catholicism to the present day.

It is extremely difficult, and, ultimately impossible, to describe the development of the earliest constitution of the

¹ H. Koch, *ZNW.*, 19,81–85

² K. Müller, *ZNW.*, 28,295

³ Ign., *Trall.*, 3,1. Eph. 6: 1 *ad. Pol.*, 5,2; cf. Vol. I, pp. 247 f.

Church, because our literary sources only rarely give an answer to the many questions which we propose to them. In the early period, these appeared as outer matters, and unworthy of discussion; when they began to be of theological importance, the observers' outlook was influenced by theory. For the period covered by the first century, the leadership of the Church was almost without exception in the hands of a synod—special conditions surrounded the first church in Jerusalem.¹ The members of this synod were called *presbyteroi* wherever Jewish influence was decisive, i.e. not only in churches of Jewish Christians, but also in Gentile Christian churches which had grown out of Hellenistic synagogues. It comprised not only all who possessed an office, charismatics as well as technical officials, but also other revered persons, in particular the martyrs,² and occasionally indeed women.³ In other places, particularly in the Pauline churches, bishops and deacons were spoken of as officials of the church, and a distinction was made between them and the charismatic apostles, prophets, and teachers, as leaders of worship. We have already seen how these different sides developed, and how the functions of the pneumatics were transferred to bishops and deacons. At an early date, however, the term "presbyter", which was sanctified by the Old Testament, and therefore regarded with greater respect, was transferred to the group of leading men in churches to whom this title was really quite unknown.

At any rate we find the college of presbyters in Rome c. A.D. 140 at the head of the church, whereas the bishops and deacons are mentioned as special officers entrusted in particular with the care of the poor, the widows, and the orphans.⁴ But they were of equal rank with the apostles and teachers of the earlier period; hence they exercised spiritual and liturgical functions,⁵ and undoubtedly belonged to the circle of presbyters. The presbyter who conducted worship was the *episcopos*, and he received the gifts destined for the care of the needy.⁶ Thus the process was already well-advanced which is described in a preliminary fashion in *1 Clement*, and in the *Didache*, and by which spiritual

¹ Vol. I, pp. 66 ff.

² Hermas, *Vis.*, 3,1,9. Hippolyt. *Church Order*, 34

³ Müller, *ibid.*, 275

⁴ ZWT. 55,136–140

⁵ Herm. *Vis.*, 3,5,1. *Sim.*, 9,26 f.

⁶ Justin, *Apol.*, 67,6

offices were transferred to the bishops. In general, the pneumatic had disappeared and only rarely did a prophet maintain a hopeless struggle for recognition.¹ The development within the college of presbyters, however, had not come to an end, and struggles for position and honour were not lacking;² the monarchical episcopacy prepared itself for, and naturally found opposition in, the college which was defending its traditional rights. Towards the end of the century, the victory was gained: the single bishop stood unchallenged at the head of the Roman church, no matter how often one found it convenient to change the title used in the course of a discussion. We hear of the presbyter who led the church, when probably the bishop was meant; and the latter retained for centuries the polite custom of describing the members of the synod as "colleagues", and himself as their "fellow presbyter".³ After the middle of the century, i.e. after Anicetus and Soter, there can be no further doubt as to the monarchical character of this episcopate.

A special status was given to the Roman bishop in outer matters c. A.D 240: the church began to celebrate the anniversary of his entry into office by a liturgical festival, and, in what is known to-day as the catacomb of Callistus, a burial vault was decorated artistically, in which were buried the bodies of departed bishops from Pontianus who died in A.D. 235 to Eutychianus who died in A.D. 282. Moreover, from that time onwards, an official "list of popes" was drawn up giving the day and year of consecration as bishop and of death, and along with it the older list was preserved which had contained no dates, but only the names of the Roman bishops.⁴ Irenæus gives us the first of such lists, c. A.D. 180.⁵ It contains a series of sixteen names which, after mentioning the apostles Peter and Paul, begins with two unknown persons, Linus and Anencletus, and mentions in the third place the Clement who is known to us as the author of the letter to the Corinthians, and who is mentioned also elsewhere.⁶

¹ Herm., *Mand.*, 11

² Herm., *Vis.*, 3,9,7–10. *Sim.*, 8,7,4–6

³ Iren. 3,2,2. 3,1 ff. 4,26,2 f. 27,1. Letter to Victor of Rome in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,14–16; cf. *ZWT*. 55,146 f. K. Müller, *ZNW*, 28,274–78

⁴ Lietzmann, *Petrus u. Paulus*, 2nd edit., 7–28

⁵ Iren. 3,3,3

⁶ Cf. Vol. 1, p. 192 f. Herm., *Vis.*, 2,4,3

The list reaches back, therefore, to the apostolic period and may rest on sound, historical tradition as far as the names are concerned; the reservation must be made, however, for the earliest period, that names were preserved of prominent members of the college of presbyters who did not officiate in strict succession, but, frequently, side by side, sharing in the leadership of the church. When the list came to be given in the form handed down by Irenæus, it had to mention the names of the successive bearers of the apostolic tradition,¹ and guarantee that the living bishop of Rome, who stood at the end of the series for the time being, was the genuine heir of the apostolic doctrine, and thereby also the one who could make authoritative pronouncements about it. The theory which Clement had laid down as to the apostolic institution of the episcopal office, and as to the necessity of recognizing apostolic succession,² actively developed still further in Rome, and Irenæus³ insisted on it because it helped to defend the theology of the bishops against the gnostics: what the bishop taught was thereby legitimized as apostolic, without further debate.

From Rome, the doctrine penetrated into the west and contributed more than a little to increasing the respect in which the Roman church was held: for, in the west, Rome was the only church which could trace back its list of bishops to the apostolic period. Tertullian of Africa, writing c. A.D. 200, called Rome happy because the apostles, Peter, Paul, and John, had laboured there as martyrs, and had poured forth both their blood and also the entire volume of their teaching. In this way, Rome, with its bishop as the vehicle of its tradition, became the apostolic authority of the west at an early date. Moreover no place in the entire occident, except Rome, had taken the trouble to make out a list of bishops or a chain of tradition reaching back to the beginnings; neither Carthage, nor the anciently famous church of Lyons, troubled themselves seriously about their early history—if, indeed, they had had such a history.

It is true that, in the east, Ignatius taught the superior authority of the bishop as regards doctrine; Ignatius's teaching was not based on apostolic succession, however, but was simply

¹ E. Caspar, *Die älteste röm. Bischofsliste* (1926), 436–72 ² Cf. Vol. I, pp. 194 f.

³ K. Müller, *ZNW.*, 23, 216–222. Hegesippus who taught this doctrine lived in Rome; cf. Eus., *H.E.*, 4, 22, 3

asserted.¹ Of course, in this case again, apostolic tradition had been mentioned, and the “elders”, the “presbyters”, who had been personal disciples of the apostles, played an important part as vehicles of this tradition;² but we hear nothing of the view that the bishop, in virtue of the succession of his office, handed down apostolic doctrine. This explains also why the greatest majority of the places founded by Apostles preserved no list of bishops nor any chain of tradition, to say nothing of handing word down. Only three cities had lists of this kind: Alexandria and Antioch, which were the two cosmopolitan cities competing with Rome,³ and Jerusalem the ancient centre of Christendom. These are the places which, in the course of the history of the Church, grew to be patriarchates, and at an early stage took dominating positions in the life of the Church: their bishops made use of a list of predecessors after they had learnt its meaning and value from Rome. This fact enables us to test the Jerusalem list, and to show, indeed, that, during the whole of the second century, this leading church of Christendom did not possess a monarchical episcopacy with a life-tenure: otherwise fifteen bishops could not have held office in the period between A.D. 134 and the beginning of the third century.⁴ But, if so, we are in a position to draw the further inference, viz. a similar state of affairs existed in other places in the east; and still further, that the institution of the monarchical episcopate took a considerably longer time to develop in the interior than we might at first be led to suppose from the circumstances asserted by Ignatius as existing in the leading cities on the coast.

We have no information about the evolution of the episcopate in the occident, apart from Rome. We hear only from Lyons that, in the great persecution there, Bishop Potheinos suffered martyrdom when more than ninety years old, and that Irenæus was his successor; the date must have been approximately A.D. 178; and, since Irenæus was certainly a monarchical bishop, it is likely that his predecessor held a similar status.⁵ In saying that, however, we have reached the limits both of our knowledge and our inferences.

¹ Vol. I, pp. 247 f. ² Papias in Eus., *H.E.*, 3,39,3 f. ³ E. Caspar, *op. cit.*, 347 f. 368
⁴ E. Schwartz in the large edit. Eus., *H.E.*, 3, ccxxvif. ⁵ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,29-5,5,8

The course of events in Alexandria was parallel to that in Rome; here, remarkably enough, we have exact information which, although coming from a later period, will stand critical examination.¹ Granted that the origins of the Alexandrian church are obscure, and that nothing is extant about the beginning of the episcopacy in this metropolitan city, except the suspiciously conventional list of names already mentioned; nevertheless, in this church, an earlier arrangement held good and was unchanged even at a later period. At any rate, in the third century the Alexandrian church consisted of a number of independent, separate communions, each of which was grouped round its own church-building, and led by a presbyter; moreover this condition of affairs lasted till the beginning of the following century. The presbyters chose one of their number to be bishop,² and to take charge of "the Alexandrian churches".³ Alexander was the first to widen the circle of persons from whom the bishop could be chosen, and he then nominated a deacon, Athanasius, to be his successor (A.D. 328).

We learn of still another and, on the surface, a very remarkable piece of news from Egypt.⁴ At first the Alexandrian bishop was the only bishop anywhere in the whole of Egypt. Bishop Demetrius (A.D. 189–232) was the first to institute three others, and his successor Heraklas (A.D. 232–47) instituted twenty others; in the course of the century the number was very considerably increased. It follows that the cities and villages of Egypt were under the leadership of presbyters—a title which was very frequent in secular life as applied to presidents of groups or committees⁵—indeed, whole groups of villages were placed under a single presbyter.⁶ This evolution may have been accompanied by the circumstance that, from the legal point of view, Alexandria was for a long time the only "city" of Egypt; and only in A.D. 202, i.e. in the time of Demetrius, did large administrative districts receive a new constitution from

¹ K. Müller, *ZNW.*, 28, 278–296

² Jerome, *Epist.*, 146, 1, 6. Severus Antioch., *Sixth Book of the Selected Letters*, 113, ed. Brooks; Eutychius, *Annales* (Arab.) *Corp. Script. Or.* 50, 95, ed. Cheikho

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 5, 9, 22. 6, 2, 2. 35. 9, 6, 2

⁴ Eutychius, *op. cit.*, p. 96, Cheikho (Migne Gr., CXI, 982)

⁵ H. Hauschmidt, *ZNW.*, 4, 235 ff.

⁶ Athan., *Apol. c. Arian.*, 85; cf. *ZWT.* 55, 150 ff.

Septimius Severus.¹ It is obvious that the Egyptian bishops owed their existence to the bishop of Alexandria, and consequently that he was their head, all of them being subject to him: in the course of the history of the church, that kind of thing occurred frequently and widely. The Alexandrian patriarch always had behind him a troop of bishops who were extraordinarily united and militant.

Only recently have we come to pay close attention to the early stages of the history of the episcopal office;² but these observations have sharpened our eyes and illuminated our conceptions of the course of events. What happened in Egypt went by no means beyond the limits of events in the churches elsewhere, in spite of first appearances. Christianity took root always in the towns first of all, and indeed as a rule in the larger towns, and thence spread through the country. In this way, it is obvious that the newly planted country churches would remain under the leadership of the urban bishop and that he would send presbyters and deacons to them; possibly he ordained these clergy and, acting as the superior authority, intervened when necessary. Moreover it was not merely the country churches which were subject in this way to the bishop of a capital city: cities both smaller and greater became spiritually dependent in a similar manner.

About A.D. 200, we see that Serapion, bishop of Antioch, was in charge of Rhossos nearby,³ and probably of other towns. Many districts in Pontus were grouped, each group under one bishop. Armenia c. A.D. 250 had only one bishop. In Crete it would appear that the two bishops of Gortyn and Knossos, about A.D. 170, shared the spiritual oversight of the whole island.⁴ In Gaul, Irenæus of Lyons was described as "the bishop of Gaul", and the neighbouring town of Vienne was certainly subject to his predecessor Potheinos.⁵ Even in the time of the fully-developed metropolitan system, such circumstances may still be frequently observed in remoter regions.

If it now came about that a bishop of the centre was no

¹ U. Wilcken, *Grundz. u. Chresto. d. Pap.*, 1,41

² Duchesne, *Fast. Episc. de l'Anc. Gaule*, 1,37 ff. K. Müller, *Beiträge z. Gesch. d. Verf. d. alten Kirche = Abh. Akad. Berlin*, 1922, no. 3, p. 5 ff.

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,12; cf. Ign., *ad Rom.*, 2,2. "Bishop of Syria"

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 4,23,5. 7 ⁵ Op. cit., 5,23,5. Duchesne, *ibid.*, 1,40-43

longer able to exercise sole oversight of the districts dependent upon him, he appointed as many bishops as were necessary at the time, and did so in a similar fashion to the way in which the bishop of Alexandria acted in Egypt, i.e. as the number of vigorous churches increased so did the number of bishops. But the relationship of daughter to mother church was retained, and was expressed in the subordination of the newly-instituted episcopal chair to the earlier one; the bishop of the principal town retained for an indefinite period the right of instituting and consecrating the other. Even in the third century, the great centres of Christendom would enjoy an obvious, visible, and superior status over areas of a considerable breadth. In this way also we can explain the rights of Carthage, as principal city, over all Africa, and, similarly, of Rome, over large portions of Italy. Moreover, the close relations between Rome and many regions of southern Gaul and Spain must be due to the same cause. Still further: Carthage itself was clearly conscious, c. A.D. 200, of its dependence on Rome:¹ it had received, first, Christianity and, later, the monarchical episcopacy from that city.

In particular, the quite unique relation between the Alexandrian and the Roman church can be explained in the simplest manner from this standpoint. For, after the Egyptian capital had begun to play a part in church history at the beginning of the third century and until the catastrophe of Ephesus (A.D. 449) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451), the closest relations existed between Alexandria and Rome; we shall give many instances in the course of the present work. In the struggles of the fourth century, indeed, Julius of Rome² declared, in all seriousness, that it was contrary to the custom of the Church to depose the bishop of Alexandria without the agreement of Rome. We may add that, not only bishop Dionysios of Alexandria, but also several of his successors, including indeed the most eminent, Athanasius and Cyril, subordinated themselves to Rome in a manner which at first bewilders us. In so doing, they acted in a manner very contrary to the traditional attitude of other

¹ Tert., *de Praescr.*, 36

² Julius of Rome, *Epist. Danium Flacillum*, 22, p. 385b Constant (from Athan., *Apol. c. Arian.*, 35)

eastern princes of the Church. This fact brings the conclusion near that Alexandria was founded as a daughter church to Rome and endowed by Rome with episcopal authority. The legend that Mark, the disciple of Peter, was the founder and first bishop of this church,¹ is a deduction based on knowledge as to the historical relationship between the two churches. We see, indeed, that the roots of the Roman primacy extend deeply into the early history of Christianity.

As regards the relationships of the patriarchates, the Church of the first century shows no signs of any wider organic connections. Moreover the whole Church, conceived as a unity, was, and for a long time remained, an invisible entity fully comprehensible only as an idea. It is true that the churches from one end of the world to the other were inspired by the same spirit and bound together by a thousand bonds of mutual aid in either material or spiritual necessity, but there was no outer form which made this unity concrete as an earthly organization also. Yet in difficult times the bishops of the regions concerned came together for mutual counsel. Such synods took place even in the second century in Asia Minor, and served to ward off Montanism and to determine the attitude to the question of Easter, but they were unofficial assemblies, and lacked definite legal competence. It is true that their conclusions were given by the Holy Spirit, and to that extent were normative for the whole Church. In practice, however, that held good only for the churches which, in fact, recognized the conclusions because they agreed with them. In other districts, where a different opinion was held, as in Rome in regard to the question of Easter, the conclusions were not recognized, and it remained uncertain who was in the right. Rome's attempt to claim a superior voice was denied, at that time, on all hands.²

Even the synods of the third century bore this character. They made unofficial pronouncements whose weight was the greater according as more bishops took part, i.e. greater according to their geographic basis: and the rightness of the content, together with the appropriateness of their conclusions,

¹ Monarch. Prologue to St. Mark (*Kl. Texte*, 1, 2nd edit., p. 16, 16), Eus., *H.E.*, 2, 16, 1. Similarly the legend of Trophimus *re Arles*; cf. Caspar, *Gesch. d. Papsttums*, 1, 347

² Eus., *H.E.*, 5, 24, 10 f., and esp., Cyprian, pp. 235 f., and pp. 254 f. *infra*

gained for many such pronouncements the recognition of the whole Church. But they were not of themselves a higher authority, by spiritual right, in such a way as to be superior to that of the individual bishop. Every bishop was, and continued to be, in possession of complete apostolic authority in doctrine and discipline: the synods were only more powerful because they were able to assert or apply the combined authority of the episcopacy. The principle held good that the Holy Spirit led the Church through the bishops: and the Church was a unity although it was embodied in thousands of churches and hundreds of bishops.

Chapter Three

THE NEW TESTAMENT

AT THE TIME OF JESUS, IT WAS A PREVAILING CUSTOM AMONGST the Jews to give an authoritative decision on theological and religious disputes by quoting the words of celebrated teachers. The whole of the Talmud is constructed of such rabbinic sayings dealing with these discussions; the sayings were diligently collected, learnt by heart, and handed on as a sacred authority from generation to generation. One collection of teachings of human and divine wisdom, which was put together from the words of the earliest Rabbis, bears the name *The Sayings of the Fathers*, and is to be found to-day in every Jewish Prayer book. From this standpoint we can easily understand, if any explanation is necessary, that the disciples of Jesus stored the sayings of their Master faithfully in their memory; they collected, and finally wrote them down, in order that the second generation, and the churches of other regions, might always have this precious material in front of them. Paul's letters are a direct testimony to the significance of the sayings of Jesus for deciding disputed questions,¹ although in the case of Paul, who became a disciple only after the Master's death, references to the historical Jesus are very few. Throughout the whole of the first century and a large part of the second, Christian writings constantly make use of the phrase, "the Lord said", in order to introduce an authoritative quotation.

For early Christendom there were two sources of divine revelation, "Scripture", i.e. the Old Testament, and "the Lord" in His words as handed down. A third source, viz. the Spirit speaking through an ecstatic prophet, was regarded, as we have seen, with ever-increasing mistrust in comparison with the two other sources, and finally it became silent. Hence arose a practical necessity to give a written form to the tradition of the words of the Lord, which we mentioned in the second place, in order that it should be available at all times and everywhere: that is how it came about that the words of Jesus were

¹ 1 Cor. 7: 10, 9: 14, 11: 23; 1 Thess. 4: 15; cf. *Handb. zu Röm.* 12, 14

written down in the form which we have already discussed, and which, as the "sayings source", goes back to Matthew.¹ In the case of the Rabbis in the Talmud, many a saying was inseparably connected with some incident; so also was the case with Jesus, and indeed to a much higher degree. In this way, many accounts of the deeds and miracles of the Lord were introduced into the collection of sayings. The preaching about Jesus the Christ gave the hearers doctrine as well as the Master's teachings, for He Himself was the subject of faith; the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions in His life, suffering, and death proved Him, even to opponents, to be the Messiah, and the saviour of the world. Thus, gradually, the record of the Lord's work on earth took shape as a unity, beginning with the Baptism and ending with the Resurrection. This story has actively affected mankind for nineteen centuries, and has constantly gained new disciples for the Master ever afresh.

The earliest form of the record, and the one to which we have immediate access, is Mark's gospel. The gospels of Matthew and Luke are new editions which have been enlarged and improved by incorporating the "sayings source", together with other traditions. The two earliest gospels are typical of popular books without literary claims; on the other hand, Luke, who had made use of other valuable sources, intended his writing for a more educated class: he dedicated his work to a man named Theophilus, who had some eminence owing to his rank or his wealth;² and Luke was explicitly, and not unsuccessfully, concerned to write a genuine, historical book, but without robbing his work of its popular character.

These three gospels contain by no means all the genuine, current tradition about Jesus: but almost everything else has been lost to us, and we can rarely lay hold of a saying of Jesus that appears to go back to sound tradition. A few have been introduced here and there in the manuscripts of our gospels: e.g. the *Pericope Adulterae*, which many manuscripts, and hence also our English versions, give as John 7: 53-8: 11, in spite of the fact that it is missing from all good manuscripts of the gospel. The style and vocabulary of the passage help to prove that it is an interpolation.

¹ See Vol. I, p. 46

² Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung u. Anfänge*, 1,6 f.

Certain manuscripts introduce after Matt. 20: 28 a completely independent parallel to Luke 14: 8-10; and a completely new saying is to be found appended to Luke 6: 4: "on the same day He saw a man working on the Sabbath and said to him: Man, if you know what you are doing you are blessed, but if you do not know, you are accursed and a transgressor of the law."

Other sayings are to be found quoted occasionally in ancient Christian writings, without its being possible for us to trace them back to any particular gospel: nevertheless, they may come from sound tradition current outside, since such tradition did not die out even after the gospels had been composed. As late as the second century, a man like Papias emphasized the fact that he did not think it so valuable to make use of the books as of oral tradition. Some such a tradition is represented in Acts 20: 35: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said it is better to give than to receive." Such sayings are called "agrapha", and have been carefully collected;¹ but, in spite of excellent work in the past, many questions still remain unanswered. For when the gospels were written down, the process which we have already described,² and in which the tradition of Jesus was transformed and reconstructed, did not stand still but, at first unconsciously and then to an increasing extent consciously, brought forth further fruits. We may take an example of the first case. When Clement of Rome wrote to Corinth he said:³ "The Lord Jesus spoke as follows:

Be merciful in order that you may receive mercy.
 Forgive in order that you may be forgiven.
 As you do, so will it be done to you.
 As you give, so will it be given to you.
 As you judge, so will you be judged.
As you show kindness, so will you be shown kindness.
 With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you."

Many scholars have believed this quotation to come from an ancient source, e.g. from a lost gospel or possibly a collection of

¹ A. Resch, *Agrapha* (= T.U. NF. 15,3-4, 1906); E. Klostermann, *Kl. Texte*, 11, 2nd edit., 1911; M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 33 seq.; cf. W.

Bauer, *Leben Jesu im Zeitalter*, etc., 377-415

² Vol. 1, pp. 47 f. ³ Clem. 13: 2

sayings, and they have pointed particularly to the new saying of Jesus which I have printed above in italics. The fact is, however, that here we have something created by Clement himself; he was putting familiar sayings together, and transforming the style of protasis and apodosis so as to make them similar. The actual sources are to be found in Luke 6: 36; Matt. 6: 14, 15; Luke 6: 31 = Matt. 7: 12; further, Luke 6: 37 = Matt. 7: 1 f.; Luke 6: 38 = Matt. 7: 2. Alternatively, and more simply, we may say that Clement combined certain sayings from Luke 6: 31–38 with Matt. 6: 14 f. There remains the word of Jesus about showing kindness; it was composed freely by Clement himself in order to bring the number of sayings up to seven; and the fact that the word for “showing kindness” is very rare in Greek, but frequently used elsewhere by Clement, proves the correctness of this theory. This is an instance which enables us to understand how such a saying came to be attributed to Jesus. We can see how it was newly created, without any special purpose, half unconsciously, on the basis of rhetoric and style, and by a writer who paid attention to literary considerations.

Other sayings were created with a distinct tendency, and were clearly meant to throw the authority of Jesus into the scale on the side of this or that doctrinal opinion. We have already discussed such transformations of traditional sayings when we dealt with the Jewish-Christian gospels.¹ In addition, the more we learn of gnosticism, the more evident does this practice become, and the more untrammeled and capriciously does theological invention operate. Most of the fragments of papyrus which contain new sayings of Jesus,² spring from this way of inventing them when they would accord with the purposes of gnosticism; genuine and spurious were frequently intermingled in order to strengthen the impression of historical trustworthiness.

After the invention of single sayings, the next step was the writing of new gospels; these, however, always followed the earlier Synoptic gospels and used them as foundations. But the

¹ Vol. 1, pp. 185, 188 f.

² E. Klostermann, *Kl. Texte*, 8, 2nd edit., p. 16–21; *ibid.*, 11, 2nd edit., pp. 26; H. B. Swete, *ibid.*, 31, 4 f.; also H. I. Bell's *Fragments of an unknown Gospel* (1935), are relevant here

new evangelists rejected all the restraints which kept the Fourth Gospel within the bounds of the type of thought characteristic of the Church, and invented freely, the boundless world of speculation being unrestricted by any historical tradition or doctrinal authority. This fact can be clearly seen in the large fragment of the *Gospel of Peter*¹ which was discovered in 1886: building materials are borrowed from all four evangelists, and put together to form a record of the Passion; everywhere we can observe how imagination has added to the historical events. In the description of the Resurrection, the gnostic Christ appears as a giant as high as the sky, carried by two men whose heads reach to the clouds, and behind him hovers the cross in motion: "And I heard a voice saying out of heaven: Hast thou preached to those that sleep? and the answer rang from the cross: Yes."

The forms of what is known as the *Gospel of the Hebrews*,² which was current in Jewish-Christian circles, were affected by similar fantasies. Isolated reports of, and quotations from, other gospels of this kind have been preserved,³ e.g. the gospel of the *Egyptians*, of *Thomas*, of *Matthias*, and others; there can be no question as to the gnostic character of these writings.

The gospels of the Infancy constitute a special category. At an early date, many Christians wanted to know something of the Lord's early history, and since there was no historical tradition, legend took its place. Hence arose the birth stories which we find in Matthew and Luke, and also the story of Jesus at twelve years of age in the temple, Luke 2: 41–52. In order to study the difference between an uncontaminated and genuine legend on the one hand, and on the other, a mere fantasy designed to satisfy curiosity, we need only consider, from this standpoint, the later stories of Christ's childhood. These arose during the second century, but developed further, adopted a new literary form, and persist in substance to the present day in various shapes in devotional books or in apocryphal lumber rooms. Among them are the narratives of *Thomas*⁴ of which Irenæus

¹ E. Klostermann, *Kl. Texte*, 3, 2nd edit., *Apokrypha I*; English translation in M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 13

² Vol. 1, pp. 185, 189

³ E. Klostermann, *Apokr. II (Kl. Texte, 8)* and M. R. James, *op. cit.*

⁴ *Evangelia apocrypha*, Tischendorf, 2nd edit., 140–209

had heard before A.D. 200¹ and of which we possess several expanded forms dating from a later period. Here the child Jesus has been transformed, by an imagination proper to a primitive nature religion, into a little man full of mana and taboo. His playmates, who annoy or strike him, fall dead; and the same happens to a schoolmaster who boxes his ear for an impolite answer. Three teachers attempt, without success, to deal with the miracle-working child:² to the first, who was to instruct him in the alphabet, he gave a lecture on the allegorical significance of the letter A; the second he killed; to the third he immediately read a passage from the Bible, and then preached to the people about the Law. But he also worked positive miracles: he shaped sparrows out of clay and made them fly away alive; when his pitcher broke, he carried the water home in the lap of his shirt; he stretched a plank to the required length for his father; he healed wounds, raised the dead, and finally brought back to life again all those he had put to death in his annoyance. In this way the narrative comes to a "happy end"; it concludes with the story of Jesus at twelve years of age in the temple, and thus effects a junction with the Synoptics.

Even in Matthew and in Luke we can see that some believers attempted to give a graphic account of Christ's human origin. This kind of effort continued and brought it about that the story of Mary was depicted in ever richer detail. We find all the basic elements in what is known as the *Proto-evangel of James*³ which was composed in its present form somewhere in the fourth century from earlier constituents: separate parts were known even in the second and third centuries. First there is the legend of Mary. The Holy Virgin's parents were Joachim and Anna: she was born by an angel's promise to her mother, who had long been childless, and was consecrated to God: she therefore lived from her third to her twelfth year under priestly ward in the temple. Then, in consequence of an oracle, she was entrusted as a consecrated virgin by the priests to the old carpenter Joseph who had long been a widower and who already had grown-up sons. Once when she was drawing water

¹ Irenaeus, 1,20,1; cf. also *Epist. apost.*, 4 (15)

² M. R. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 49ff.

³ *Evangel. apocr.*, ed. Tischendorf, 1–50. Harnack, *Chronol.* I, 598–603. M. R. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 seq.

and again, at home, when she was spinning purple for the temple curtain, an angel announced to her that she would conceive a son by the word of God. Just as Luke tells us, she visited her friend Elizabeth and remained there three months. When Joseph returned home after a considerable absence working as a builder, he discovered that she was pregnant but was reassured by an angelic vision, just as Matthew records. A divine judgment by means of testing waters absolved both from the accusations of the priests and scribes. Then the birth of the child Jesus took place in Bethlehem, and, in fact, in a cave: at the same time Mary's physical virginity was confirmed by two midwives as unbroken even after the birth. Magi came from the east, and Herod ordered the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem. Mary placed Jesus in a cattle manger, whereas little John and his mother disappeared into a mountain which opened automatically. Since Herod was particularly suspicious of John, but could not find him, he killed his father, Zachariah, near the altar in the temple, as is recorded in Matt. 23: 35.

Similarly, imagination got to work on the Passion story, particular attention being paid to the person of Pontius Pilate. To an increasing extent, the Christian church endeavoured to absolve him from the capital guilt of his unjust judgment, and to lay the sole responsibility on the Jews. According to Matthew, Pilate's wife bore witness to Jesus's innocence, and warned her husband. Thereupon he ceremonially washed his hands and refused responsibility for the death of Jesus. The way in which Pilate was later on depicted added further details of this type, as a kind of apologetic; until it came to pass that, about A.D. 200, Tertullian¹ referred his pagan opponents to a report which Pilate, already a Christian by conviction, had himself given to the Emperor Tiberius about Christ. Fifty years earlier, Justin Martyr in similar circumstances had often² quoted the *Acts of Pilate* to prove the correctness of his items of information about Jesus. This fact bears witness that the spurious *Letter of Pilate* was known to both of these church Fathers; and it has been preserved in various recensions in later documents.³ It contains a short account of the Jewish Messianic faith, the miracles of

¹ *Apolog.* 21

² Justin, *Apol.*, 35,9. 48,3; cf. 38,7

³ Conveniently in Harnack, *Chronologie*, 1,605

Jesus, his rejection and crucifixion by the Jews, the sentinels at the grave, and the Resurrection; it concludes with the words: "I have reported this to Your Majesty in order that no man may deceive you otherwise, and lest you think you must believe the lies of the Jews." Here we see that what the centurion said at the foot of the Cross (Mark 15: 39) is far surpassed by the comprehensive and clear testimony of his eminent superior. In the course of time this kind of writing gave rise to many others on the subject of Pilate,¹ included a legend of Nicodemus, and another of Veronica, followed by an account of Christ's descent into hell. We must take note of the fact that the other side had not been idle, but had fabricated and published the *Acts of Pilate* which was conceived in terms hostile to Christianity and of which we have no other information than is given in the indignant protests of Eusebius.²

Veronica is the legendary name of the woman with the issue who was healed by Christ (Mark 5: 25): Eusebius³ says that a bronze group erected in her native town of Cæsarea Philippi represented the miracle. We read of gnostics, as early as the time of Irenæus,⁴ who revered a statue of Christ which had been made "at the instance of Pilate". It follows that, at an early date, legend said that statues of Christ had been made. But the sentimental impulse to produce portraits of the Lord came to full activity only in the Byzantine period, the most famous examples of the inventions to which it gave rise being Veronica's handkerchief, and Abgar's statue in Edessa. On the other hand, the record of the correspondence between Jesus and Abgar of Edessa is early, and arose perhaps in the third century: its kernel was an autograph letter of Jesus to this king, and Eusebius preserves a Greek text.⁵ It is not difficult to understand how it came to pass that copies of this precious letter were carried about for several centuries in the orient as protection against all forms of evil, or were chiselled into houses and city walls, into gates and doors. A description of Jesus's appearance, dating from the early middle-ages, and given in the letter of

¹ Epiphan., *hær.*, 50, 1, 5. Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, 210–486

² Eus., *H.E.*, 1, 9, 3. 9, 5, 1. 9, 7, 1

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 7, 18

⁴ Irenæus 1, 25, 6 (1, 210, Harvey)

⁵ Eus., *H.E.*, 1, 13, 6–10. Aufhauser, *Kl. Texte*, 126, 2nd edit., 22–38

Lentulus to the emperor Tiberius,¹ is still accepted by many enthusiastic believers; similarly, too, the portrait sketched in accordance with it.

The apostles of Jesus were the vehicles of the authoritative tradition about him: hence it is quite logical that Luke should continue his gospel with a second book, the Acts of the Apostles, which was intended to record how the disciples preached the gospel in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the world.² In this book, the speeches of the apostles give a graphic and authoritative description of the content of the gospel. Not long ago the historical value of the book of Acts was held in very low esteem, and, in consequence of the criticism of the Tübingen school, was regarded as the product of a tendentious reconstruction of history. Meanwhile opinion has changed fundamentally, and we now know that the author carefully collected what was accessible to him, and that he reproduced his sources with commendable faithfulness, including such as were only fragmentary. We need only to separate the fragments of the sources carefully from the historical reconstruction due to the author's mind. The long speeches are, of course, free compositions, and the author used them to place his own conceptions on the lips of the apostles; but he exercised little originality, and so these speeches trustworthily reproduce the average opinion of his time and environment.

The book is not a history of all the apostles. It describes the original church at Jerusalem; it already lay behind the author, its history transfigured in the shimmering light of the past. On that background, Acts tells of the first persecutions and of the spread of the mission, to which they gave rise, as far as the metropolitan city of Antioch. Peter stands in the forefront of events; John is sometimes present as companion, but does not speak. In addition, there are Philip and Stephen as Hellenistic missionaries. The second part of the book is given over to Paul's activities, and reproduces a considerable amount of most valuable tradition deriving from valid, if often only fragmentary, sources; from chapter twenty onwards, the narrative continues in the first person plural, and therefore

¹ Aufhauser, *op. cit.*, 43

² Acts 1: 8

comes, in some way, from a travelling companion of the Apostle, probably the author of the book, viz. Luke the physician. This makes it all the more striking that nowhere is there any trace of acquaintance with the Pauline correspondence. Hence the author must have taken up the pen at a very early date, and he must have been firmly convinced of the trustworthiness of his own knowledge; and this to such an extent that in these matters he did not think it worth while to seek further sources, although these would certainly have been readily accessible to him. Such an attitude, however, is readily conceivable in a man like Luke who had been in very close association with the Apostle. On the other hand, the abrupt conclusion and the lack of record of the martyrdom of both great apostles, Peter and Paul, can only be satisfactorily explained by saying that the author died before the work was completed.

In spite of every honest endeavour on the part of the writer, the book of Acts is not a historical work in the strict sense: neither its sources nor the talents of the author were sufficient for such a purpose. It provides us with a good narrative book of a popular kind describing its heroes in traditional style, and traditional conventions are for that very reason continually operative. Luke took over, developed in detail, and put together the sketches of the apostles in the form which was current in the tradition of the Church: in this way a series of separate stories came to be written down. They are, at times, quite loosely interconnected, and do not give the historical contexts; rather, they are concerned, above all else, with depicting the greatness of the Apostles. The Apostles, however, are not individually distinct from one another: each thinks and acts like his fellow, and, even in the case of Peter, the Judaism which marked him at first passes, after the incident of Cornelius, into the universality of Paul. Moreover, their progress is accompanied by miracles which go far beyond the restrained records in the Synoptics; and it is not by accident that we now find a broad similarity to the miraculous acts of the Hellenistic prophets.¹ On two occasions, the author brings his heroes face to face with pagan sorcerers of this latter kind: Peter repels the

¹ R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenist. Wundererz.* (1906), pp. 53 ff., 121 f.

presumption of Simon the Samaritan sorcerer (8: 20), and Paul blinds Bar-Jesus, the Cyprian magician (13: 11). The acts of the apostles do not differ outwardly from those of their miracle-working contemporaries; they are done, however, in the name of Jesus, which fact gives them their special tone and, in case of conflict, their superior power. Finally in Ephesus, both Jewish and Greek magicians are compelled to bow to Paul (19: 11–20). The reader not only enjoyed reading the narrative, but obtained an impressive proof of the veracity of apostolic preaching; in this way Luke, the popular storyteller, became, at the same time, a preacher whose popular phraseology has subsequently served as a basis for theological thought.

The writing of popular books describing the “acts” of the apostles was not brought to a conclusion with this first work. Just as in the case of the gospels, the same impulse continued to operate and produce new examples of the same category; the only difference being that the authentic material in this case was exhausted more rapidly than with the gospels, and imagination had to take its place. Everywhere we can detect that the canonical book of Acts formed the starting-point of the new efforts: it was either supplemented, or else it provided a more or less elastic framework for the new writings.

In the east, the only additional information about Peter was that he had gone to Rome, and had been crucified there: a clear trace of this has been preserved in John’s gospel (21:18). The apocryphal *Acts of Peter*¹ fill out the spaces with the free imagination of an oriental who had never seen Rome, but who knew from hearsay that there was a Forum Julium there through which ran a Sacra Via²—which is not quite correct—that the little town of Aricia was near, and that somewhat farther off lay Terracina.³ The canonical Acts had said (21: 13) that one could come by ship to Puteoli,⁴ and then continue the journey by land to Rome. There is no trace, however, of genuine local knowledge, nor of a local Roman tradition. Instead, inventive power operated the more energetically. The conflict of Peter with the Samaritan sorcerer

¹ *Acta Petri* = *Actus Petri cum Simone* in Lipsius-Bonnet 1, 45–103

² *Op. cit.* 15,32

³ *Ibid.* 4, 32

⁴ *Ibid.* 6

Simon, given in Acts 8: 9-24, was spun out further, and provided the basis of the entire narrative; this is all of a piece with the fact that Simon played a noteworthy part in the later history of gnosticism, and in any case was regarded as the author of gnostic systems.¹ In the *Acts of Peter*, he appears as an anti-Christian prophet in Rome as soon as Paul commenced his long planned journey to Spain² and left Rome. Instigated by a vision seen in a dream, Peter now leaves Jerusalem as quickly as possible in order to contend in Rome with the enemy of Christianity. The contest develops into the form of a competition of miracles in the grand style, in which Peter is always the victor. Simon is then compelled to listen pitifully to a long reproof from his own household dog, and a suckling child of seven months orders him out of the city and challenges him to a duel on the Saturday.³ It is scarcely worth remarking that, in the course of the story, several blind persons are cured, and dead people are raised: but Peter causes a dried sardine, which had been hanging at a window, to swim about happily again in the water;⁴ with a word, too, he repairs a broken statue of the emperor.⁵

In comparison Simon's efforts at competition remain poor; but at last, and in front of all the people, he flies triumphantly up to the sky over the Sacra Via, yet, when Peter prays, he crashes down and breaks a leg: as a consequence of this misfortune he dies shortly after.⁶ Peter, however, was not able to enjoy his success for long. His sermon on the necessity of chastity in the Christian life caused a considerable number of eminent Roman ladies to withhold from conjugal intercourse. The enraged husbands lay in wait for Peter, whose first intention, on the advice of friends, was to flee; but before he reached the gate he was put to shame by the Lord, and made to turn back. He was now arrested, condemned, and crucified upside down; he then delivered a speech, with marked gnostic qualities, on the symbolism of the Cross, as well as on being crucified upside down.⁷ After his death, Nero intended to begin a persecution of Christians but was turned aside by a dream. We may remark in passing that the Neronian persecution was regarded by the author as only an untrustworthy rumour.⁸

¹ Pauly-W 2. Reihe 3, 180 ² Rom. 15: 24, 28; cf. 1 Clem. 5: 7 ³ *Acta Petri* 9, 12, 15
⁴ *Ibid.* 13 ⁵ *Ibid.* 11 ⁶ *Ibid.* 32 ⁷ *Ibid.* 38 f. ⁸ Vol. I, p. 191 f.

The *Acts of Paul* not only provides the record, lacking in the canonical Acts, that his work ended in martyrdom, but, building on a few hints from that source, it constructs a record of extensive missionary journeys on the part of the Apostle which to some extent afford parallels, and to some extent supplements, to the canonical account. The work has not been preserved in its entirety, and we have to attempt to reconstruct it provisionally from various traditions and fragments.¹ In them we meet with Paul, first of all, in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13: 14), then in Iconium (Acts 13: 51), where the virgin Thecla is strongly impressed by his preaching. She now refuses marriage to her fiancé, and, when he makes complaint, she is condemned by the pro-consul to be burnt, while Paul is to be horse-whipped. But rain puts out the fire, and, having obtained her freedom, she once more seeks out the Apostle and follows him when he returns to Antioch. Here again she is sought in marriage, and when she refuses, is once more condemned to death, this time in the arena. There, however, a lioness protects her at the sacrifice of its own life. In the greatest of danger, she baptizes herself by leaping into a moat, and afterwards encounters other serious dangers. In the end she is again set free. Protected by man's clothes, she once more follows Paul, till finally she dies in Seleucia.

Paul stays first of all in Myra, and from there makes his journey, with many adventures, to Sidon and Tyre. In Ephesus he gets into trouble with the goldsmiths (Acts 19: 24) and is condemned to the arena (1 Cor. 15: 32). Thereupon a large lion lays himself at his feet, and the Apostle recognizes it as an old acquaintance: he had once preached the gospel to the animal in the wilderness at its earnest request, and had baptized it; it is now showing its gratitude. A terrible storm ends the narrative; the hail kills the other beasts, and liberates Paul and the lion. In Philippi, Paul receives a letter from the Corinthians who are being disturbed by gnostic heretics, and who beg for confirmation of their faith. He sends them a reassuring answer—put together from fragments of genuine Pauline letters. By way of Miletus and Corinth he makes his

¹ *Acta Pauli et Theclae* in Lipsius-Bonnet 1,235–269. *Mart. Pauli ib.* 104–17. Carl Schmidt, *Acta Pauli*, 2nd edit., 1905. M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 270 ff.

journey to Rome, and the story is re-told about Peter's meeting the Lord on the way to His second crucifixion. Paul hires a shed in Rome and preaches, until finally Nero steps in and burns so many Christians that the people are sated. Paul himself is beheaded, but appears afterwards to Nero and threatens him with divine punishment, whereupon the latter liberates the remaining prisoners.

The book of the *Acts of Paul* was widely read and much discussed, and the correspondence with the Corinthians stood throughout the Middle Ages in an appendix to church Bibles. The miracle stories are not quite so rank as in the *Acts of Peter*; and the legend of Thecla, with the treasure of her virginity, and the ideal picture of her spiritual love for the Apostle, were extremely acceptable, and were worked out even further.¹ Her grave near Seleucia became an important holy place, and kept her fame constantly alive.² As is only rarely the case, we have some information about the author of these *Acts*. About A.D. 200, Tertullian³ informed his readers that the book was composed by a presbyter of Asia Minor: the man had acknowledged his authorship and defended himself by pleading his love for Paul; nevertheless he had been deposed. It follows that, in the second half of the second century, such kinds of writing displeased the officials of the Church, but, amongst the ordinary members, they nevertheless enjoyed great acceptance.

The apocryphal books of Acts have been described as Christian romances, and the description is justified so long as their character as popular books is not forgotten. They make use of the same *motifs*, and aim at the same effects, as are well-known in the artificial romances of the Greek sophists; at the same time they make use of ideas and metaphors employed in those biographies of ancient prophets and miracle-workers which were written for a definite purpose and which are usually called aretalogies.⁴ The proportions of the elements naturally vary. The *Acts of Peter* is really made up of miracle-stories of the rankest kind. The *Acts of Paul* is based on the

¹ *Acta in Lipsius-B.* 1, pp. 271 f.

² Delehaye, *Origines du culte des martyrs*, 2nd edit., 161 f.

³ Tertullian, *de baptismo*, 17

⁴ Cf. Rosa Söder, *Die apok. Apostel-geschichten und die romanhaft Literatur der Antike* (1932)

motif of journeyings typical of romances, but links this as far as possible to the records contained in the canonical book of Acts. Even the erotic element, which is only faintly echoed in the *Acts of Peter*, occurs much more definitely in the *Acts of Paul*, and passes from the negative attitude of condemnation into the positive attitude of spiritual love.

The *Acts of John* represents a third type.¹ Miracles are greatly increased: the Apostle frequently permits them to be performed by other persons,² and a test by means of poison is used as a normal procedure in the case of one transgressor. This man proves the genuineness of the poison in that he dies of it. The Apostle had previously taken the poison without hurt and after the successful test on the subject of the experiment, John now brings him back to life.³ Side by side, there is the humorous popular story⁴ of the way in which John, staying in an inn, turns all the bugs out of doors during the night; they wait obediently until morning breaks and the Apostle permits them to inhabit again their accustomed cracks in the bedstead. The second peculiarity of the *Acts of John* is its marked rhetorical character; it comes out in the narratives, but especially in the Apostle's numerous addresses and sermons.

The content is relatively simple. Domitian had been incited by the Jews against the Christians; John, who was highly revered by them, he exiled to Patmos, although Domitian held him in esteem on account of his virtue and miraculous power. There John saw the revelation which he wrote down. Set free under Trajan, he journeyed by way of Miletus back to Ephesus. Here he restored to life the strategos, Lycomedes, and his wife; he gathered all the old women of the city into the theatre, and healed them of their illnesses; by means of prayer he split the altar and temple of Artemis in two, whereupon the populace destroyed the remains of the temple. The story of Drusiana constitutes the climax, and it works out a *motif* typical of romances. A libertine digs into the grave of a lady who had died of heart trouble on account of his misdeeds; he attempts to reach the body which had been denied him while she was alive. But a snake protects the dead person, kills the wicked man's

¹ *Acta Joh.* in Lipsius-B. 2, I, 151–216. M. R. James, pp. 228 ff.

² *Op. cit.*, 24. 47. 83

³ *Ibid.* 9–11

⁴ *Ibid.* 60 f.

assistant, and roots the man himself to the spot. John arrives with the husband, brings back the dead woman to life, and converts the scoundrel; when the assistant is called back to life he remains unrepentant, and so goes to the devil.

A theological section follows in which John explains both the various forms of Jesus's appearances as Risen Lord, and also His apparent body. In this connection he recites a hymn¹ which, before being taken prisoner, the Master had sung to his disciples while they danced round Him in a circle and responded "Amen". Then it records a last revelation of the Lord, who did not really suffer on the Cross, but who, through the gnostic mystery of the cross of light, had pointed the way to knowledge of the redeeming logos and to a higher super-human existence. The Apostle's own end is introduced by long speeches and prayers, and a celebration of the Eucharist: finally he lies down in the grave, and gives up the ghost with rejoicing.

The three *Acts of the Apostles* mentioned thus far probably date from c. A.D. 200, and consciously connect up with the earlier tradition of the Church, even if they then proceed to develop their material quite freely. But Christian people did not limit their interest to the Apostles of whom genuine information was to hand, but were concerned also with others who were nothing but names, and regarded them as welcome starting points for new fantasies. The *Acts of Andrew* has only been preserved in fragments² but it applies the familiar methods in delineating an Apostle of whom there was no historical information. The fragments which can be understood at all show an ascetic attitude towards marriage, and also contain observations on the mystery of the cross.³ The Apostle dies a martyr's death in Patrae hanging on the cross, similarly to his brother Peter.

The *Acts of Thomas* are the best preserved examples of these popular writings which have no historical basis, but best preserved because they enjoyed the widest circulation. They originated in the atmosphere of Edessa the east-Syrian capital,

¹ *Acta Joh.* 94-6

² *Acta apost. apocr.*, ed. Lipsius-B. *Loc. sit.* pp. 38-45 and 1-37. M. R. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 337 ff.

³ *Passio Andreae*, chap. 5-10

and were originally in Syriac, but soon translated freely into Greek. They had a wide circle of readers in both languages, and were therefore subject to all sorts of changes. The basis of the narrative is the Apostle's missionary itinerary to India: in the first part, this thread is used for stringing together a number of adventures which conclude with the conversion of an eminent lady, Mygdonia; through her, Christianity enters the court of King Misdaios; and the description of all the resultant complications fills the second part of the *Acts*, and naturally concludes with the Apostle's martyrdom.

It contains the usual apparatus of miracles, but enriched by a few delightful traits. An envious dragon is compelled to suck back again the poison which he had squirted into his opponent,¹ and he dies as a consequence. The foal of an ass addresses a long speech to Thomas, asks him to mount the saddle, and, in response to the Apostle's question, declares itself to be a descendant of Balaam's ass, and related to the one on which Christ rode into Jerusalem.² Having rendered its service, the animal dies—similarly to the speaking dog in the *Acts of Peter*; that indeed is typical of such animal fables.³ Shortly afterwards, a whole drove of wild asses come and show themselves ready to help, and they present the apostle with a span of animals for his waggon; the most gifted of them exorcizes daemons, exhorts Thomas to perform miracles, and itself preaches to the people.⁴ There is also a miracle similar to that in the *Acts of John* where a dead person is raised through the instrumentality of an intermediary.⁵ We are told what a dead person had seen in heaven, and a woman, restored to life, tells of her journey through hell.⁶ Revelations in dreams are frequent everywhere, but here a dream is recorded which foretells the fate of the royal house, and which is an exact reproduction of an ancient Indian myth.⁷ Closer examination shows that a multitude of allegorized, mythological motives shape the stories contained in these *Acts*, and also that the large numbers of speeches have been enriched by elements drawn from ideas rooted in a

¹ *Acta Thom.* 30–3

² *Ibid.* 39–40

³ *Ibid.* 41. *Acta Petra* 12. Kerenyi, *Die groech.-orient. Roman-literatur* (1927), p. 255

⁴ *Acta Thom.* 68–79

⁵ *Supra*, p. 83. *Acta Thom.* 54

⁶ *Ibid.* 22, 55–57

⁷ *Ibid.* 91. G. Bornkamm, *Mythos u. Legende in den apokr. Thomasakten*, p. 61.

This book contains further details on the gnostic character of the *Acts*

gnosticism which can be traced back with confidence to the Syrian gnostic Bardesanes, and which provided not a little material for the Manichean view of the universe. Many passages can be described as direct quotations, because the author has been more or less skilful in introducing into his context hymns or prayers which he found already complete:¹ the celebrated Hymn of the Pearl depicts Mani's mission mythologically, and accordingly was incorporated subsequently into the *Acts* which enjoyed a lasting popularity among the Manicheans.

The early Church possessed no *Acts of the Apostles* in addition to those already discussed, and at an early date these were brought together into a unified corpus, which passed as the work of a certain Leukios Charinos, and of which in the ninth century the patriarch Photios possessed a copy.² While they were, of course, by different authors, they were written at times not too widely separated from one another, and all arose in the orient. What gives them an inner unity is not the general romantic character, or the world of fable and miracle with typical sketches and constantly repeated motives, but rather the similarity of their conception of Christianity. The religion preached by their apostles emphasizes continence above all other virtues, and that indeed in the sense of a complete sexual abstinence which condemns even conjugal intercourse as sinful. Indeed even a reference to the possibility of the procreation of children is repudiated with outright asperity, indeed with contempt.³ This attitude is not to be understood as a romantic or mythical trait in a mystic heavenly eroticism, if on occasion such motives undoubtedly play a part; rather it is determined by an ascetic conception of Christianity such as spread at an early date in the orient and, in its crassest forms, required celibacy from all baptized persons. In the fourth century, that was the ideal⁴ in Syria. Alternatively, only the ascetics were regarded as Christian in the full sense. At bottom this was the view of the hermits and monks of the whole world

¹ *Acta Thom.* 6–7 Hymn of the Virgin of Light, 27.50 Epicleses, 108–13 the Hymn of the Pearl (Syriac, *ZNW.*, 4, 273–309)

² *Photios cod.* 114: also Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchr. Lit.*, 1, 116–123

³ *Acta Thom.* 12

⁴ Cf. Vol. 4, chap 6; Rev. 14: 4; cf. Aphrahat, *Homilies*, 7, 20, p. 345. Parisot., cf. also *Hom.* 6, 3–4, pp. 256 ff. Parisot.; Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, pp. 136 ff., etc.

in ancient times, and their writings give unmistakable expression to this standpoint.

The second characteristic of all these *Acts* is their impregnation with gnostic ideas, as is obvious in every story, every speech, every prayer, and every revelation. In particular, Christ is depicted, not only as transformed into the miraculous and superhuman, but into the magical and ghostly. Christ is invisibly present,¹ sometimes bodily, sometimes without body;² He appears as a boy, grown man, old man,³ as the Apostle's double,⁴ actually visible then suddenly disappearing,⁵ finally as revealing His nature in the form of a cross of light; as the divine logos who is simultaneously Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and who in ultimate reality had never hung on the wooden cross.⁶ All this breathes the spirit of gnosticism.

For these reasons, most of such books were formerly regarded by scholars as productions of a gnosticism outside of, and opposed to, the Church. It was felt, too, that they had come to us edited to a greater or less extent in a catholic sense. This opinion was supported by the existence of later redactions in which the offensive gnostic elements were, as a matter of fact, to a large extent wanting. No trace however has been found of the supposed gnostic original forms, in spite of the numerous new discoveries in recent decades; meanwhile other evidence has shown that it is impossible to draw a sharp line between church and gnosis. Hence it now seems justifiable to regard these books as valuable, popular testimonies to the penetration of gnostic ideas into orthodox churches. It was writings of this very kind which required to be adorned with the fanciful imagery and esoteric language of a superhuman prophecy, if they were to satisfy properly the curiosity which ranged beyond the customary literature provided by the Church, and which longed for secret information of a historical and theological nature. In a case like this, gnosticism acted as an inexhaustible spring, and provided, in a thousand, varicoloured pictures, the things for which hearts yearned. The tendency which comes plainly to the light of day in the

¹ *Acta Thom.* 34. 154 f. 165

² *Acta Joh.* 93

³ *Ibid.* 87-92. *Acta Petri* 21

⁴ *Acta Thom.* 11. 152 f. *Acta Pauli* 21

⁵ *Acta Thom.* 34. 155

⁶ *Acta Joh.* 98-101. *Acta Petri* 38

apocryphal gospels, and which might make the reader somewhat distrustful, was here in the happy situation of being able to play its part decked in the mantle of romantic confabulation.

Thus it comes about that all these *Acts* contain gnostic points of view and gnostic doctrines, and these are brought forward naïvely as if obvious, till it is easy to see how readily readers accepted this kind of literature. Here we see one of the means by which gnosticism, regarded as a whole, obtained influence in the churches of the second and third centuries: at the same time the writings themselves are proof of the extent to which gnosis had already been successful. For, at least in the case of the *Acts of Thomas*, it is possible to think of a gnostic sectary as the author: the other *Acts* can scarcely have been introduced into the Church from outside, but originated in the midst of congregations which felt themselves to be faithful members of the church catholic. This, however, plainly indicates the danger of which the early fathers had spoken so earnestly.

Later Judaism, instigated by the Book of Daniel, carried to a further stage, and practised very industriously, the writing of apocalyptic literature. The authors wrote under some name in high esteem, and dated their work back into a much earlier period. At times, they set out from personal experiences, and began with visions and revelations which they described and explained. Alternatively they simply presented holy authorities such as Enoch,¹ Moses, Baruch, or the Sibyls, and let them talk about everything which theological and political curiosity might wish to know in regard to the past, the present, and the future. Among the early Christians in the first period, the question as to the time and manner of setting up the Messianic kingdom was the subject of yearning enquiry, and the negative answer with which the Master refused to inform his disciples² gave no sufficient satisfaction to the Church. But the portents of the great event, graphic pictures of stress on earth and terrors in heaven, could be at least inferred from the Lord's last speeches as recorded in the Synoptic gospels.³ Here the imagination of the prophets flamed up and attempted to

¹ Vol. I, pp. 37 ff.

² Mark 13: 32 and parallels

³ Mark 13: 5-37 = Matt. 24: 4-36 = Luke 21: 8-36

see in advance what they supposed to be the secrets of the End.

So far as we know, the first work of this kind was the Book of Revelation, sponsored in the Johannine circle. It is the work of quite a great artist who, seized by the Spirit, broke open the doors of eternity by the strength of his feelings. The material was drawn by him from the many coloured world of late-Jewish conceptions of the beyond, and enriched by mythical pictures belonging to ancient oriental and Hellenistic belief. He transformed it afresh, however, and grouped it till it had a seven-fold rhythm, which echoes ever and again, and issues in the tremendous finale of the last vision.

The exiled Apostle is living on Patmos: it is Sunday. Then the Lord calls to him, and he looks around and sees the Son of Man in heavenly glory. He falls prostrate and hears the words: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and have the keys of death and Hades. Write the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." The prophet has received his call. His first act is one of apostolic admonition. Seven letters are sent to the seven churches of Asia Minor, for the most part uttering warnings and threats, but heartfelt praise about two of them. That ends the prelude. Now the gates of heaven open, the seer mounts upwards, and beholds God on His throne surrounded by twenty-four elders and hosts of angels singing "Holy, Holy, Holy". There lies the book with seven seals, on the throne sits the Lamb, and, surrounded by the loud singing of hymns of jubilation, the Lamb solemnly breaks one seal after another.

The four apocalyptic horsemen now ride into the world; the earth quakes and the sun is darkened. The souls of the martyrs cry aloud for revenge, the angels of God seal the faithful who are to receive salvation. Then the seventh seal is broken: seven angels appear and blow on seven trumpets. A dreadful revelation follows on every blast. The seventh trumpet introduces heavenly visions, the Messiah is born and the dragon attacked. Michael flings the monster to the ground, but already hostile beasts are coming up out of the deep, and making mankind subject to themselves to the point of worship; secret signs and numbers contain the clue for understanding their nature.

And lo: the Lamb now stands triumphantly on Mount Zion surrounded by those faithful to him; angel voices proclaim that Babylon the Great is fallen, and that all idol worshippers shall suffer punishment. The sickle reaps God's bloody harvest. Seven basins of wrath are emptied over the earth, and once more Babylon's condemnation passes in front of the seer's eyes. A heavenly hallelujah pays homage to the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the devil is flung into the prison of the deep, and Christ rules with his own on this earth, for a thousand years.

Then once more hell opens its gates: the devil gets free and, with all the powers hostile to God, makes an attack on the Holy City. But fire falls from heaven and destroys the evil creatures, the devil and his own are flung into the pit of hell to be eternally tortured, and the dead rise. The Last Judgment begins, and each one is judged according to his works. That is the end. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away and the sea is no more. And I saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." Now the seer comprehends all the magnificence and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, and his tongue declares in happy jubilation: "And I John am he that heard and saw these things." He then falls down in worship: the heavenly tumult fades, and only disconnected utterances still sound in his ear. Thereupon he writes down what has been revealed to him, and he adjures every one who copies out this book of prophecy, as he values his salvation, to add nothing and subtract nothing. Then he concludes with the yearning sigh: "Yea, I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

Modern research agrees with the ancient church in ascribing the composition of this book to the reign of Domitian, and indeed towards the end of that reign; Domitian died in A.D. 96. The author makes use of earlier ideas and introduces them into his scheme, unaware that the incongruities would show up when modern exegetes examined it; our author was confident of the overpowering, total effect of his composition. Owing to the commanding authority of his personality even the old material shines in the new light of the Christian view of eternity.

This higher perspective transfigures also the hatred against the Roman empire, intended by the reference to Babylon, into a prophetic preaching of judgment by a prophet working with final and absolute standards.

We pass from the workshop of a creative artist into the modest little room of a humble hand-worker when we turn to the second apocalypse belonging to ancient Christianity. Shortly before the middle of the second century in Rome, Hermas, the brother of bishop Pius, wrote a work in three parts which is known by the title *The Shepherd*. It is impossible to determine with certainty to what extent it gives merely a literary form to actual experiences on the part of Hermas: ever and again, however, throughout the whole writing, it is clear that he depends upon elements derived from books, and the obvious attempt of the author to knit together the formless material, which is continually growing under his hands, fosters the impression in the reader that the author is not working independently, even where he asserts that he is giving his own matter. This book is an apocalypse, because it records visions and awaits the divine Judgment. The visions, however, are really allegories which have been artificially worked out while the writer was pen in hand; and the coming plagues, together with the Last Judgment, are not actually seen and depicted as in the case of John, but only worked out in order to serve the main purpose of the book.

The particular object of the whole is to preach repentance to Christendom, and, in continually changing similes, proclaims its teaching that a Christian who has fallen into serious sin has the privilege of again cleansing away his sins by remorse and penitence—but let it be noted carefully that it is only once after baptism: in this way a brief opportunity is still afforded the church. Those who take the prophet's words to heart will make use of this opportunity before it passes, and the Last Judgment begins. The purpose of the book, with its metaphors and its long-winded, moral observations, is to give the reader a deepened understanding of sin and of the true Christian way of life. The teachings are given in the first instance by a revered old lady, who personifies the Church, and by an angel in the form of a shepherd who is strikingly similar to the usual vehicle

of revelation in Hellenistic mysticism.¹ Work on behalf of the church is twice symbolized² with the metaphor of building a tower, and the metaphor of the shepherd is repeated,³ and then surrounded by rambling allegories of trees.⁴ The parable of the two cities, only one of which can be the true Christian home,⁵ reproduces a universal Christian viewpoint.

On the other hand the *Apocalypse of Peter*,⁶ which belongs probably to the same period as Hermas, is a worthy representative of its class. Here the Lord addresses His disciples on the Mount of Olives, and, at their request, gives them the portents of His second advent, and of the end of the world. In doing so he makes much use of Synoptic passages, but greatly elaborates the ideas found there. A description of the Last Judgment and the punishment of sinners constitutes the bridge to a detailed description of Hell where the different kinds of wrongdoers are tortured with punishments corresponding to their earthly deeds. The righteous, however, enter the Elysian fields of Acherusia. The disciples ask to be permitted to see a righteous person from that life, and two of the blessed appear in their shining glory; thereupon heaven opens, and the whole splendour of paradise is unveiled to the apostles' eyes. Nevertheless, the author's imagination is able to give but little about heaven, whereas his visions of Hell are numerous and manifold, and compounded of all the images which the orient and Greece had long ago brought together.⁷ This difference, it may be said, can also be clearly traced in Dante, the greatest of the successors of our author; but, if we compare the arid description of heaven in this writing of Peter's with the Johannine blessedness of the heavenly Jerusalem, we gain a strong impression of the great difference in the quality of these two works.

An apocalypse in the form of a revelation of the Lord has only lately come to light in the *Epistula Apostolorum*.⁸ Here it is the Risen Lord who gathers his own round about himself, and instructs them in heavenly matters: his descent to earth, his

¹ Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (1904)

² Vis. 3; Sim. 9

³ Vis. 5; Sim. 6

⁴ Sim. 2-4. 8; cf. also 5

⁵ Sim. 1

⁶ The entire tradition has been assembled by H. Weinel and Hennecke, *op. cit.*, 314-27

⁷ A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (1893)

⁸ Carl Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu* (TU. 43), 1919. H. Duensing, *Epistula Apostolorum*, 1925 (*Kl. Texte* 152). M. R. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 485 ff.

incarnation, his relation to the Father, the resurrection of the dead as well as the signs and sufferings of the final age, the missionary task of the disciples, and the duty of bold, admonitory preaching and faithful confession. On all hands we see that the author was concerned to bring out the New Testament bases of his discussions. But what he gives us over and above bears not only the well-known characteristics of orthodox church opinion, but is also enriched by gnostic ways of thought. On the one hand, admittedly, the bodily character of the Risen Lord is expressly asserted; but on the other hand the deity of the logos is fully equated with that of the Father. The Father is in the logos with His form, power, perfection, light, dimension, and voice.¹ When the logos descended to earth, he put on the wisdom and power of the Father, and in each heaven he clothed himself in the form of the angels domiciled there, so that he remained unknown. Consequently he appeared to the Virgin Mary as Gabriel, and then entered her body and became flesh.² On earth, Christ preached salvation, carried the preaching into the underworld, and enabled human flesh to become imperishable by taking it on Himself.³ He freed mankind from the power of the archons, and brought man to heavenly peace.⁴ At bottom, all these are good orthodox ideas although clothed in forms of gnostic origin.

The *Epistula* dates from the period c. A.D. 140 or A.D. 170,⁵ and was probably written in Egypt. It is the earliest known example of apocalyptic writings which pretend to be based on speeches of the Risen Lord. This form of writing was frequent among the gnostics, and even in the third century gave rise to such a considerable work as the *Pistis Sophia*. We can readily understand that literature of this kind rapidly became suspect to the Church. But it was not rooted out, and universal human curiosity, which longs to see behind the curtain of the beyond, entered into an alliance with the gnostic type of speculation and, in one century after another, continually produced new apocalypses; these never lacked plenty of readers in spite of the opposition of the Church.

Christian epistolary literature was founded by the apostle

¹ *Epist. Apost.* 17 (28)

⁴ *Ibid.* 28 (39)

² *Ibid.* 13 f. (24 f.)

⁵ *ZNW.* 20, 173–76

³ *Ibid.* 21 (32)

Paul, although he never for a moment thought of writing anything of a literary character. To him his letters were simply the means which served the purpose of his apostolic labours, and, had he been able to deal with everything orally, he would never have written a single line. When he requests the church at Colossæ¹ to read the letter which he had addressed to Laodicea, and to allow the Laodiceans to read the letter he had sent to themselves, he takes this course because it saves time, for he has no need to write the same thing twice. But because his powerful personality is very evident in these letters, they have become genuine literature of the highest kind, and were quickly recognized as such by the churches. The exchange of letters between Colossæ and Laodicea was surely not the first, nor did it remain the only, case.

At an early date the Apostle's letters began to be collected in Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi;² and towards the end of the first century, when someone set about gathering all Paul's letters, copies of nine letters addressed to churches were available, together with that to Philemon. This collection formed the foundation of the extant corpus of letters. What could not be brought together at that time has been lost—this includes, e.g., two letters to the Corinthians, of which one was written before and the other after the canonical 1 Corinthians. Even in the early church, no one had further knowledge of any letter of Paul's outside the collection we possess. Meanwhile these had become widespread throughout the entire church and frequently copied. Even Ignatius and Polycarp were acquainted with them in the time of Trajan. At an early date, a definite order of the letters was established, based broadly on the purely outer principle of their length. The longest letter, i.e. that to the Romans, comes first, the shortest last; nevertheless letters addressed to the same church remain together. In the second century another principle of arrangement existed in which the letters to the Corinthians came first;³ and Marcion made the attempt⁴ of arranging them chronologically. We give this as a

¹ Col. 4: 16

² Cf. Dobschütz in *Die evang. Theol.*, 2 (1927), p. 9 Goodspeed, *Introduction to N.T.*, 1937, pp. 210 ff.

³ *Handbuch* on *Röm.*, 4th edit., pp. 1-4

⁴ Cf. Vol. 1, p. 255

deduction from various hints, for all the surviving manuscripts have Romans at the head of the collection.

Even at this early date the collection contained an unauthentic letter, viz. Ephesians. The *Pastoral Epistles* were soon added: Polycarp quoted from them¹ and consequently he probably found them in his Pauline codex. Our canon places them before that to Philemon so as to give a group of letters to individuals after those to churches. Probably about the middle of the second century and somewhere in the east, perhaps in Egypt, the Epistle to the Hebrews was then declared to be Pauline, and accordingly introduced into the collection. Its varied situation in the manuscripts shows even to-day that it was only introduced at a later period: sometimes it comes at the end of the entire corpus, sometimes after the letters to the churches, sometimes in their midst before or after the letters to the Corinthians, or between Colossians and Galatians. As early a person as a teacher of Clement of Alexandria² described it as a Pauline letter, but was already greatly puzzled by the difficulties which then arose. This cannot have been long after A.D. 150. But the copies of the earlier Pauline corpus were by that time so widely dispersed throughout the entire Church that only rarely was Hebrews added. In the east it was fairly fortunate, but the west declined Hebrews as non-Pauline, and was only willing to accept it in the fourth century in consequence of theological arguments conditioned by ecclesiastical policy.

As we have already said, the Pauline letters became the model of all the other early Christian epistolary literature. Because Paul's letters were to be found in all the churches of Christendom, it came to be thought that they were written with that object; and his example was imitated by others, who then wrote tractates intended for the entire church, and gave them conventional titles: they are called the letters of James, Peter, Jude and Barnabas, or, as in the case of 1 John and Hebrews, they preserved, at least to some extent, the form of a letter. The genuine ancient Christian letters were written in imitation of Paul; we have already discussed the letter written by Clement of Rome, the seven by Ignatius, and Polycarp's covering letter. Other didactic and admonitory letters occur as interpolations

¹ *Pol. Epist.* 4,1. 5,2. 9,2. 11,4

² *Eus., H.E.*, 6,14,4

in larger works: the seven letters of the Apocalypse, the correspondence with Corinth in the *Acts of Paul*,¹ the exchange of letters between Clement and James at the beginning of the *Clementine Homilies*. Worthless fabrications include the correspondence between Paul and Seneca, which was produced probably in the fourth century,² as well as the apocryphal letter to Laodicea³ which was intended to fill the place of the Pauline letter mentioned in Col. 4: 16. We have already dealt with the imaginary *Letter of the Apostles* which contains an apocalypse.⁴

The whole of this voluminous literature was intended directly or indirectly to give the Church authoritative instruction, and it was largely successful in this object. But the richer the theological speculation and the creative power of imagination, the stronger became the contradictions within this type of literature, and hence also the antitheses between the new teachings and the long-familiar traditions of the Church. The fertile source of new writings was the spirit of gnosis, and we have already seen how strongly it penetrated into orthodox communities. The Church was compelled to search for a trustworthy safeguard, and she found it in limiting the recognized and authoritative teaching to what was apostolic. The Apostles were the last and also the only authorities: so ran the canonical principle which expressed the Church's belief as to the nature of their essence. In the earliest period, until the middle of the second century, "The Lord" was quoted as the highest authority. This referred, of course, to what He had said while on earth. The speaker or writer did not usually say whence he derived the saying of "the Lord", nor at bottom was that fact of importance as long as the validity of the quotation was not subject to doubt. It was assumed, without question, that the quotation had come from the usual sources, and, if a source was an oral tradition, it was not felt to be less trustworthy on that account. This naïve condition of affairs could not be maintained intact when the influence of gnosticism made itself felt. Sayings of Jesus, which had a strange sound, and were full

¹ *Supra*, p. 82

² Jerome, *vir. int.*, 12

³ Published by Harnack, *Kl. Texte*, 12 cf. M. R. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 478

⁴ *Supra*, p. 92

of unusual doctrines, began to be put on His lips, as in the new gospels which we have already discussed. It was not the fact that they were new that made the Church mistrustful—even Matthew and Luke were new once on a day, yet without offence—but that they recorded new teachings and unaccustomed theology as spoken by Jesus.

Even the gospel of John had met with opponents in Asia Minor, to whom its logos doctrine was a subject of suspicion, and who rejected it on account of its inconsistencies with the record contained in the Synoptic gospels:¹ nevertheless John's gospel maintained its place. When now the gnostic gospels and apocalypses came forward and made the same claims, the Church sought an unambiguous criterion, and found it in the requirement of apostolic authorship. The Apostles alone were the unexceptionable vehicles of the tradition of the Lord, and as a consequence only those gospels which were composed by Apostles held good in the Church. In this way, the gospels of Matthew and of John assumed canonical authority, and the objection felt in Asia Minor against the Fourth Gospel, on account of its new teachings, was significantly enough combined with the assertion that it was not by John the apostle, but by Cerinthus a heretic.² In the case of Mark and Luke, refuge was taken in the declaration that these two persons were disciples of apostles, and accordingly that the former wrote under Peter's authority and the latter under Paul's.³ Thereby these four books were really canonized, for the reference to their apostolic authority, which can only appear to us as a reminder of sound historical bases, had the deeper meaning that this particular tradition of Jesus—and this alone—had been established and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit working authoritatively in the Church.

The Apostles were recognized in the Church as the only unconditionally legitimate vehicles of the spirit. Everything else which claimed to be the working of the spirit was tested by their messages. In this way their writings were regarded as inspired by the spirit, and were, therefore, of final, divine

¹ Epiph., *Haer.*, 51,3-4 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.* 51,3,6

³ Justin, *Dial.*, 103,8 *Iren.* 3,1,1 f. *Frags. Murat.* 1-34, and *Mon. Prolog.* (*Kl. Texte* 1, 2nd edit., p. 5, 12-16)

authority. They came to be regarded as equal in origin to the documents of the Old Testament, or, to speak more accurately, as a necessary complement at its side and bringing it to a completion; they, too, were "Holy Scripture". A New Testament came to stand alongside the Old Testament, and it became customary to appeal to it by using the form of words, "it is written", in a way similar to that which, at an earlier date, had been applied only to the Old Testament. And now, when the words of Jesus were quoted, it was not as if they had merely been spoken in the past, but rather in the present: "The Lord says", for He now spoke out of the Sacred Books as if always present to His Church. The process by which the gospels became canonical may be clearly observed in its preliminary stages in Justin¹ shortly after A.D. 150, and it was completed at the time of Irenæus,² i.e. a generation later.

It must be admitted that occasionally one detects a certain amount of hesitation. The church at Rhosso in Syria made use of the *Gospel of Peter*,³ and Serapion the bishop of Antioch had allowed himself to be committed by the presence of the apostolic name to recognize this custom. In so doing, he acted correctly in accordance with the principle of apostolic authority. But when he examined the text more closely, and detected docetic heresy, he forbade the book. In other words, he tested the genuineness of the apostolic title by comparing the teaching of the book with orthodox doctrine, and, since he discovered crucial differences, he declared—conformably to the facts—that the name was spurious and that the authority founded upon it was void. The Church dealt in the same way with the remaining pseudo-apostolic gospels, and thus came to the generally accepted view that there were not more than four gospels, and indeed could not be more—a fact which Irenæus had already demonstrated theoretically and symbolically.⁴

The fact of there being four gospels, however, had its disadvantages. As far as the Church was concerned, there was only *one* gospel, only one message of God to mankind, and the question arose as to why it was divided up among four books. Further, why were there so many repetitions, and also

¹ Justin, *Dial.*, 49. 100. 101. 104–07

² Iren. 3,11,8. 2,22,3. 2,30,2

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,12,2–6

⁴ Iren. 3,11,8

incompatibilities and apparent contradictions, in the various gospels? Surely the ideal state of affairs would be *one* gospel in *one* book. That was perhaps the case in the earliest period when the Synoptic gospels were confined, each to different regions, some using one gospel and some another. Marcion had permitted only one gospel book to be used in his church. About A.D. 180 two men commenced a practice which the Church employs to-day, whenever popular preachers attempt to revitalize religion by teaching "Bible history"; out of the four records, they make a single text. The first to do this was bishop Theophilus of Antioch; his work has disappeared without trace.¹ On the other hand, the second enjoyed great success: he was Tatian, a pupil of Justin. His gospel harmony "of the Four", known as the *Diatessaron*, arranges sections of all four gospels as a continuous gospel story; this book was accepted in the Syrian church for official use even in divine worship, and only in the course of the fifth century² was it displaced by the canonical four gospels. Tatian's work was in common use elsewhere for a long time afterwards, and the surviving translations suggest that Romans as well as Teutons learned the gospel from it; even an Arabic edition has survived. The original has disappeared, and it is a question whether it was first put together in Greek or Syriac: quite lately a Greek fragment has been excavated on the Euphrates.³

Nevertheless the Church on the whole refused to accept any such abbreviation of the gospel texts. The struggle against the arbitrariness of Marcion and gnosticism had shown her the value of a tradition founded on a good historical basis, a tradition which was now respected and guarded and recognized as the written word of God, and as something which could not be arbitrarily made shorter. The four gospels were thus kept intact. Nevertheless it is worth while to make the point that the Christians never came to use the small comb after the fashion of the Jewish Masoretes in regard to the Talmud. With all their respect for the word of God, the copyists, even in the later centuries, did

¹ Jerome, *Epist.*, 121, 6, 15

² Theodoret, *Haer. fab.*, 1, 20 (4, 312 Schulze) Burkitt, *Evangelion da mepharreshe*, 2, 173 ff.

³ Excavation in Dura: C. H. Kraeling, *A Greek Fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron (Studies and Documents III)*, 1935

not hesitate to "correct" the text here and there in detail, by harmonizings, or by accepting variants, from other manuscripts. The consequence was that a whole forest of variant readings, additions, and omissions came to stand side by side. The same fate overtook the manuscripts of translations of the New Testament, and, as a result, it is the textual criticism of the Sacred Scriptures which offer the most difficult problems in this department of study. Only in Syria were the codices of the official translation of the Bible copied out with an obviously religious care which went far beyond the usual, and which therefore protected the text from distortions.

In regard to their authority as divine revelation, Marcion was the first to put the Pauline letters on the same level as the gospels,¹ a result which necessarily followed from his theology. The orthodox church indeed prized these letters from the beginning; as soon as the Apostles came to be regarded as the unique vehicles of revelation, in the manner described above, their letters had to be regarded as the inspired pronouncements of the Holy Spirit, and so were added to the germ of the New Testament. The process can be traced in the works of the writers who, towards the end of the second century, placed the apostolic letters side by side with the gospels,² and then gradually came to quote them with the solemn formula of "Scripture";³ but this use of language was only gradually adopted. The Pauline corpus constituted the nucleus of the collection of apostolic letters, and Marcion had no other such writings in his canon. The ancient Syrian church also limited its canonical epistles to Paul's.⁴

In the course of the fourth century, the Syrian Fathers recognized the three large, general epistles: James, 1 Peter, 1 John, and the official Bible of the Syrian churches, known as the *Peshitto*, included them, c. A.D. 400 in the New Testament. This "canon of three epistles" held good also in the sphere of the church of Antioch, and the great preachers and theologians who belonged to this province or lived under its influence recognized no other general epistles. In the west it is possible

¹ Cf. Vol. I, p. 256

² *Iren.* 1,3,6 (1,31 Harvey); *Acts* as "Scripture" 3,12,5. 9. (2,57,65 Harvey)

³ Clem., *Strom.*, 1,87,7 f. 7,84,2 f.; cf. 7,95,3 ⁴ W. Bauer, *Apost. der Syrer*, 34

to trace an evolution which begins with the two letters, viz. 1 Peter and 1 John, already known to Polycarp of Smyrna c. A.D. 115; James is never mentioned. These two letters constitute the foundation to which, after the second century drew to a close, the four shorter general epistles, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, were joined in all possible orders; the Latin lists of the canon still extant reveal graphically the varied character of the church's judgments about this part of the New Testament.

The Alexandrian church showed forth her connection with Rome in the fact that even she made use of the western canon: Clement of Alexandria quoted 1 Peter, 1 and 2 John, and Jude, and, in the *Hypotypes*, wrote a consecutive commentary on these documents.¹ Alexandria, however, was hospitable. Here the epistle of *Barnabas* was reckoned in this group,² and its author was called an apostle;³ even the epistle of Clement of Rome was regarded as apostolic,⁴ and the *Didache* was quoted as Holy Scripture.⁵ We catch glimpses of the same attitude here and there even in the writings of Origen who, it should be remembered, was an expert literary critic. The same attitude, indeed, has left its traces in the great Bible codices which have come down to us from the fifth century. Both the Codex Sinaiticus and the Alexandrinus place an appendix at the end of the New Testament, in which the former includes *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, whereas the latter includes the two epistles of Clement of Rome. This fact shows how strongly Christians in Egypt felt it was necessary to include these writings in their Bibles.

If we now combine the canon of all the epistles as recognized in the west with the canon of Antioch, we get a canon of seven General Epistles, opening with James, followed by 1 and 2 Peter, 1 and 2 and 3 John, and Jude. The sequence was definite in the east, a fact which shows that the old canon of three epistles formed the basis; whereas in the west the order varied, the letters of Peter, the apostle of Rome, often being first. We find this canon of seven epistles, c. A.D. 320, in Eusebius of Cæsarea, and it spread farther in the course of the fourth century: it reached Egypt and the west, and only then, carried

¹ Clem. *Alex.*, ed. Stählin, 3,203–215

² Eus., *H.E.*, 6,14,1

³ Clem., *Strom.*, 2,31,2. 2,35,5

⁴ *Ibid.* 4,105,1

⁵ *Ibid.* 1,100,4

on the tide of the Egyptian church policy, was it victorious in the east along with the Nicene Creed.

The Book of Acts took part in this process and was elevated to the canon quietly and as of natural right: it was indeed the continuation of Luke's gospel, and at the same time the necessary complement to the apostolic letters. It was these two facts which made up for the lack of apostolic authenticity, and silenced any questions. We can understand, however, that in the earlier period this book was not held to be of the same authority as the other writings of the New Testament, and was seldom quoted: as late as the beginning of the fifth century it was practically unknown even to wide circles of the church in the capital city of Constantinople.¹ We cannot be quite sure that it was known in Africa, c. A.D. 200,² but it was usually regarded as part of the canon at this time; indeed the ancient Syrian church³ placed it on the same footing as the Pauline letters.

The canonical character of the Apocalypses, on the other hand, was warmly disputed. As revelations given by the spirit these writings claimed the highest authority for themselves without more ado. The Revelation of John explicitly curses anyone who adds or deletes a single word. Similarly, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* insisted on being heard, and wide circles in the church granted their request. In particular *Hermas* was much read in the west towards the end of the second century, and from Rome it reached Egypt where it maintained its place longest of all. In Rome it was thrust into the background as soon as the canon began to be defined⁴ on the basis of the apostolic principle. After the third century, it was still occasionally esteemed for private reading, whereas in Egypt it was held in high respect until the fifth century, and prized as a valuable appendix to the New Testament. The *Apocalypse of Peter* was regarded as canonical by a Roman critic,⁵ c. A.D. 200, on account of its apostolic name, but he added the note that "Many of our people are not willing that it should be read

¹ Joh. Chrys., *Hom.*, 1, 1. *Act. Apost.* (9, 1 Montf.) of the year 401

² Tert., *De Praescr.*, 22

³ *Doctrina Addaei*, p. 46, edited Phillips. Zahn, *Gesch. d. neut. Kanons*, 1, 1, 373

⁴ *Fragsm. Murat*, lines 73–80

⁵ *Op. cit.*, lines 71–73

aloud in church". Hence in the west it did not attain honourable rank, although it enjoyed respect in Egypt, where Clement expounded it in the *Hypotyposes*; in the fifth century, in isolated towns of Palestine, it was still read aloud in the churches on Good Friday,¹ a practice which, at this period, was really quite a rarity.

The Revelation of John quickly came to its own in the second century. Soon after A.D. 150, it was to be found in Rome,² a little later in Gaul, Africa, and Egypt, and thereafter its worthiness and apostolic authority were firmly rooted in the west, and on the Nile. By the nature of the case, it was also acknowledged and esteemed at an early date in the east.³ But the same circles which repudiated the Fourth Gospel also set aside the Book of Revelation, and disputed its apostolic authorship; distrust towards all new prophecies had come to be strongly felt in the struggle with the Montanists, which we have still to describe, and operated also against this book of prophecy.⁴ In the third century, the Book of Revelation was attacked by officials of the Church in Egypt: Dionysios bishop of Alexandria was struggling, c. A.D. 250, against crass chiliasts who looked forward to a fool's paradise enduring for a thousand years after the end of the world, and who supported this expectation by Rev. 20. In a polemic against Nepos, bishop of Arsinoë, as the leader of this movement, Dionysios subjected Revelation to a sharp criticism, and, while fully recognizing its spiritual character, denied its apostolic authorship.⁵ This attitude on the part of the bishop was learned, based on sound theology, and taken up against a book still included in the Bibles of his church, where it long remained. On the other hand, Antioch and the Syrian church had not accepted Revelation, and we find the same standpoint in Palestine⁶ and the hinterland of Asia Minor.⁷ Even here, however, the progress of the policy which the Egyptian church carried through after Nicea

¹ Sozomenus 7,19,9

² Justin, *Dial.*, 81,4

³ Presbyter in *Iren.* 5,30,1.; cf. 33,3. and Papias in *Eus.* 3,39,12. Theophilus in *Eus.* 4,24. Apollonius in *Eus.* 5,18,14. Melito of Sardis in *Eus.* 4,26,2

⁴ Epiph., *Her.*, 51,33. cf. *Iren.* 3,11,9; Caius in *Eus.* 3,28,2

⁵ *Eus.* 7,25. *Dionys. Alex.*, edited Feltoe, p. 116 ff.

⁶ Jerome in *Anecdota Maredsolana* 3,2 (1897), p. 5 f. Cyril of Jerus., *Catech.*, 4,36

⁷ Gregory Naz., *Carm. Lib.*, 1, section 1, no. 12 (2,260 Ben.); cf. *ibid.* 2, section 2, no. 8, 289 ff. (2,1104 Ben.). Amphilocius of Iconium in Zahn, *op. cit.*, 2,1, p. 217

appears to have influenced the canon towards the end of the fourth century, and so to have been of advantage to Revelation, yet by no means with the same success as in the case of the seven General Epistles. The Byzantine church always regarded the book with much hesitation, and expressly sanctioned an ambiguous verdict even at the council of Constantinople¹ in A.D. 692.

It was inevitable that a canon of the New Testament should be formed out of early Christian literature as soon as its documents were regarded as containing revelations of the Holy Spirit. This point of view was implied in the early Christian conception of the spirit; when the operations of the spirit were unbounded, so, likewise, were the possibilities of producing new writings of an authoritative character. About the middle of the second century, and even later, a New Testament was coming into being which was continually being enlarged, and gnosticism provided tools of trade appropriate to the work in hand. The church then recognized the danger that was threatening her, and called a halt to the process. The principle of apostolic authorship meant that the time limit had already been passed, and this enabled it to break the authority of the free, prophetic spirit. What took place in the sphere of church constitution was paralleled in that of literature: the Apostles became the guarantors both of episcopal authority and of the books of the New Testament—and the same thing was to happen in regard to doctrinal formulas. The foundation of the church catholic had been firmly laid.

¹ *Conc. Trull, can. 2* (6,1139 Labbe)

Chapter Four

THEOLOGY AND THE RULE OF FAITH

THE RELIGIOUS ADHERENTS OF THE GREEK MYSTERIES HAD taken a certain delight in working out ritual formulas and pronouncements which had an esoteric ring, and in which the experience of the mystic, or some fundamental truth of the religion, was expressed in a manner intelligible only to an initiated person;¹ it was a way of formulating a liturgical creed of a private sort. Side by side with this, the populace sometimes used a confession of the godhead in the form of an acclamation, an address which was constantly repeated rhythmically by the people crying in chorus. Some such scene is depicted graphically in Acts 19: 34: the people of Ephesus protested against Paul's missionary preaching, "and all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians." A ruler's divinity was acclaimed in the same way when he entered a city.² So also Sarapis³ was greeted with the formula "There is only one Zeus-Sarapis", and, in the same form, the moon or the sun was worshipped as "the one god in heaven".⁴ Indeed such acclamations by masses of the people are incidentally described as an enthusiasm induced by a divine spirit.⁵

The primitive church⁶ also united in the confession "Jesus is Lord", which was made by the congregation all speaking in unison when they were seized by ecstasy. This action was a counterpart of the patriotic confession that the "Emperor is Lord", a confession made in the course of the imperial cultus.⁷ Amongst the pagan people of eastern cities, the confession was shouted in address to the "one Zeus-Sarapis", and was a familiar sound; similarly Paul expressed the Christian antithesis to the pagan polytheistic faith in the sentence⁸ "Yet to us there

¹ Examples in A. Dieterich, *Mitrasliturgie*, pp. 213–19; cf. Firmicus Maternus, *de errore prof. relig.*, c. 21–26

² Athenæus 5, p. 213 in E. Peterson, *Heis Theos*, 141 ff.; cf. 270 ff.

³ O. Weinreich, *Neue Urkunden zur Sarapis-religion* (1919), 24–30

⁴ Peterson, *op. cit.*, 260–268 ⁵ Dio Cassius 75,4,5 f.

⁶ 1 Cor. 12: 3; cf. Rom. 10: 9 ⁷ Mart. Pol. 8,2 ⁸ 1 Cor. 8: 6

is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, to whom are all things, and we through Him". These, in themselves, were genuine beginnings of the formulation of a Christian creed, and they were not isolated. At baptism, the initiate confessed his faith in the presence of the one who administered the baptism, and of the congregation. But the church itself put into formal language what it understood as the meaning of the death and resurrection of the Lord, i.e. its faith in His divine origin and His glorious second coming; these formulas occasionally took on a hymn-like sound. It is no accident that the much-used, Old Testament word for "confess" also conveys the sense of "extol", and the prayer of thanks, when the Eucharist was celebrated, was frequently transformed into a solemn confession of God's saving act done on behalf of Christian believers in Him.

The starting-point of the evolution of every creed is the confession of Jesus as Messiah, a confession which is expressed when He is given the very title of Christ,¹ and is accordingly named "Jesus Christ". This formula, however, quickly lost its original force and significance when it was transferred to Greek soil, and "Christ" hardly meant more, even to the readers of Paul's letters, than the surname of Jesus. Instead, two other formulas² came into the foreground: Jesus is "the Lord" and the "Son of God", various additions being made at an early date to these basic assertions. When the formula was produced: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the Saviour", the initials of the five words of this creed in Greek produced the Greek word *Ichthys*, i.e. "fish", and therefore, probably at a very early date, a fish was chosen as a graphic symbol of Christian faith. No painted examples and no *graffiti* have survived from earlier than the third century, but the symbol is quite common in writers c. A.D. 200,³ and consequently was probably an ancient tradition. Indeed it was extended, and the mystic letters were combined with a T, which reproduced the form of a cross,⁴

¹ Matt. 27: 17, 22; John 1: 41; Acts 9: 22; 1 John 5: 1

² "Lord": 1 Cor 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9; "Son of God": 1 John 4: 15; cf. 5: 5, 10; Heb. 4: 14. Acts 8: 37 as a baptismal creed.

³ Tert., *de bapt.*, 1, perhaps also Clem., *Paed.*, 3,59,2. Origen, *Commentary on Mt.* tom. 13,10 (3,230 Lom.); Inscription of Aberkios (in Dölger, *Ichthys*, 2,457. 486–490) with the acrostic

⁴ ZNW. 22,263. *Or. Sib.* 8,217–250

and thus produced the creed, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the crucified Saviour".

Side by side with these private formularies, there was, from the first, an evolution of expressions of faith which took place quite in the open. Paul himself, at the beginning of Romans, formulated the gospel of God as the message of "His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord." Here he depicts the secret of the person of Jesus from the standpoint of his sonship to David and to God; but in another passage he describes the work of redemption as a process of humiliation and exaltation: "Christ Jesus who, being in the form of God counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Both these expressions of faith in Christ have a formal character,¹ the first being conceived more didactically, the second being modelled similarly to a hymn; and we meet with both types again in the further history of the Church. The first was frequent in the course of instruction intended for catechumens, the second bore a liturgical character, and was employed especially in working out the form of eucharistic prayer used at the Lord's Supper, when the assembled church expressed its thanks, through the lips of the priest, for Christ's incarnation and act of redemption.

It is not improbable that we ought to regard the numerous and varied formulations of faith in early Christian literature as echoes of a custom in active use in the churches in their teaching and liturgy, and that we ought to value them accordingly. The custom continued to be quite active, as is proved by

¹ Rom. 1: 3 f.; Phil. 2: 5-11

the many new forms with which it expressed both the whole and the details of the gospel of Christ. In addition to the confessions of faith which we have already mentioned, Paul added the early church's tradition of the Resurrection; he regarded this tradition as one of the principal elements of instruction about Christ, and enriched it out of his own knowledge.¹ In the writings subsequent to Paul, we can see the confession of Christ developing ever richer forms. To the simple expressions of the earliest period there were added the further clauses: birth from the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit,² genuine humanity with eating and drinking,³ baptism by John,⁴ suffering under Pontius Pilate,⁵ preaching in hell and ascent to heaven,⁶ sitting at the right hand of God,⁷ also the Second Advent and the judgment of the living and the dead.⁸

We see, then, that all the doctrinal articles to be found in the Apostles' Creed appear about the end of the first century in the formularies of the Church, giving them fullness and an impressive definiteness. They were evolved, however, because the Church felt a need for formulating its belief, and not because some special form of attack had to be met. But Ignatius emphasizes the fact that Christ was truly born, truly persecuted, truly crucified, and he adds that Christ ate and drank; here we can say with confidence that Ignatius is repudiating docetic views which denied altogether Christ's genuine humanity.⁹ Other confessions of Christ have survived from the following period, and their connection with the earliest pronouncements is very plain.¹⁰ The most important is contained in the earliest surviving eucharistic prayer, which the liturgy of Hippolytus gives as the introduction to the words of institution at the Lord's Supper: it shows what place, and, in all probability, what a crucial place, in the life of the church was occupied by the confession of Christ properly so-called.¹¹

Contemporaneously with this confession, a form arose which contained two parts and expressed the indivisible unity of

¹ 1 Cor. 15:3-8

² Ign., *Eph.*, 18,2. *Smyr.* 1,1

³ Ign., *Trall.*, 9

⁴ Ign., *Eph.*, 18,2. *Smyr.* 1,1

⁵ Ign., *Trall.*, 9. *Magn.* 11. *Smyr.* 1,2; cf. 1 Tim. 3:16.

⁶ 1 Pet. 3:19, 22 in the confession 3:18-22; cf. 1 Tim. 3:16

⁷ 1 Pet. 3:22

⁸ 2 Tim. 4:1

⁹ Cf. Vol. 1, pp. 245 f.

¹⁰ *Didascalia* 6,23,8; *Const. Apost.* 7,36,6; Justin, *Dial.*, 85, 132; cf. *ZNW*. 22,266 f.

¹¹ *Infra*, pp. 165 f. gives the text

faith in God and in Christ. As against the polytheism of pagan belief, Paul expressed with perfect explicitness what it was that a Christian confessed: "One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him."¹ Such two-fold forms in two sentences recur continually in the early period, in the Pastoral Epistles, in Irenæus, and in the Acts of the Martyrs.² The confession which Justin made before his judges ran: "We worship the God of the Christians, the one God, whom we hold to be the original creator of the entire world, of things visible and invisible; and the Lord Jesus Christ the servant of God who was predicted by the prophets as the future prophet of salvation for mankind and as a teacher of noble knowledge." In Smyrna c. A.D. 200, a theological conflict broke out with Noëtos, and the presbyters of the church expressed their faith in the following manner:³ "We also know in truth one God; we know Christ, we know the Son, suffering as He suffered, dying as He died, and risen on the third day, and abiding at the right hand of the Father, and coming to judge the living and the dead. And in saying this we say what has been handed down to us."

The dominant form, however, had become the threefold confession of Father, Son, and Spirit. Even the church at Corinth in Paul's time was acquainted with the three-fold formula, as is proved by the concluding greeting of 2 Corinthians, and Matthew's gospel gives it a liturgical form when prescribing baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.⁴ In the course of centuries, this root gave rise to the innumerable multitude of trinitarian creeds. The basis could be extended in a two-fold manner: either by giving greater detail to the separate parts, or by adding new parts. Both methods were employed, and also both were combined. At the end of the first century Clement of Rome wrote:⁵ "Have we not one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace which has been poured out upon us, and one calling in

¹ 1 Cor. 8: 6

² 1 Tim. 6: 13; 2 Tim. 4: 1. Pol. Phil. 2. Iren. 3,1,2. 3,4,1. 3,16,6. *Acta Justin*

^{2,5} Mart. des Hl. Schapur, in Braun, Ausgw. Akten Pers. Märtyrer, p. 2.

³ Hippolytus, *Contra Noëtum I* ⁴ 2 Cor. 13: 13; Matt. 28: 19

⁵ 1 Clem. 46: 6

Christ?" In the second century a certain writer¹ regarded the five loaves at the feeding of the 5,000 as a symbol of the five-fold Christian faith "in the Ruler of the entire world and in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, and in the holy Church, and in forgiveness of sins". In this case, the trinitarian confession has been expanded by additions until it is a formula of five parts. About the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr frequently mentions a baptismal confession which may well have been expressed in the following words:² "I believe in God the Father and Lord of all, and in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the Holy Spirit who prophesied through the prophets." In this case, the three-fold form has been preserved although each part has been expanded by additional pronouncements, and this method of extension was the one of which the most use was made during the whole evolution of the creeds.

A whole series of detailed confessions of this kind is to be found in Irenæus towards the end of the second century,³ in Tertullian⁴ c. A.D. 200, and his contemporary, Hippolytus of Rome;⁵ it is as plain as the day that they were particularly given to extending the second article, and of doing so by transferring here, more or less completely, the early and, originally, independent⁶ confession of Christ. All this can be studied most illuminatingly in Rome. In this city there was an early trinitarian confession, with each article in three parts, and thus with nine parts altogether; it spread to Egypt, and has survived there in numerous sources. It ran:

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty;
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
And in the Holy Ghost, the holy church, the resurrection of
the flesh.

This formula has been given three separate and distinct clauses; a confession of Christ was soon introduced into the second article at the same time as the third was extended by

¹ *Epist. Apost.* 5 (16)

² Justin, *Apol.*, 13,3. 61,3. 10. 13. Hahn, *Bibl. d. Symbole*, 3rd edit., pp. 4 f.; cf. *ZNW*. 21,31 f.

³ Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–8. *ZNW*. 22,272 f. 26,93 f.

⁴ Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–11; cf. *ZNW*. 21,25–27

⁵ *ZNW*. 26,76–83

⁶ *Supra*, pp. 105 ff.

introducing the clause on the forgiveness of sins. The result is what is known as the early Roman creed, which lies at the basis of all the western creeds, and therefore also of our Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty;
 And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord,
 Who was born of the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mary,
 Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried:
 on the third day he rose from the dead,
 ascended into heaven,
 sat down at the right hand of the Father;
 from whence he will come to judge the living and
 the dead;
 And in the Holy Ghost, the holy church, the forgiveness
 of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.

The arrangement of the sentences brings out clearly the Christological addition, but at the same time it also shows a further fact: there are now two different clauses making assertions about Christ, and both beginning with the pronoun "Who". The first mentions the birth from the Holy Ghost and the Virgin, and is therefore apparently intended to explain more exactly, on the basis of Luke 1: 35, how Jesus could be described in the first line of the article as "the only begotten Son of God". The second clause combines assertions about events from the Passion to the Ascension, and the future Advent for the Last Judgment. There is no particular difficulty in combining it with the description of Jesus as Son in the introductory line of the article: according to Phil. 2: 5-11 Jesus was exalted on account of His obedience as proved by His suffering, and given the title of "Lord", the heavenly *kurios*. In this way, it becomes plain that the whole Christological addition is a Biblical and theological explanation of the early form, which was a simple confession of "Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, our Lord".¹

It is possible to observe an entirely similar process in the eastern churches. From the numerous forms of confession of faith of the fourth century, an archetype can be worked out² which was probably worded as follows:

¹ K. Holl, *Ges. Aufsätze*, 2, 115-122

² ZNW. 21, 1-24

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
 the creator of everything visible and invisible;
 And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
 Who was born from the Father before all the Aeons,
 through whom everything came into being,
 Who became man, suffered, and rose on the third day,
 and ascended into heaven,
 and who will come in glory,
 to judge the living and the dead;
 And in the Holy Ghost.

This creed, too, was welded by introducing Christological pronouncements into a simpler trinitarian confession which can be recognized as having an essentially different previous history. Its basis is Paul's two-fold confession¹ of the

one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we
 unto him;
 and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things,
 and we through him.

This is proved not only by the "one", duplicated in the first and second articles, but also by the formula "through whom everything came into being" in the Christological part; and, finally, by the lack of a "one" in the third article, which itself appears to be a subsequent appendix. From the original form in Paul, a trinitarian confession developed in the orient which was worded somewhat as follows:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
 of whom everything is,
 and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
 through whom everything is,
 and in the Holy Ghost.

From this creed there developed in Rome, by deletions, additions, and rigid systematic arrangement, the nine-fold form which we have already discussed. In the east, the first article was transformed so as to express more definitely a clear confession of the Creator of the world, a process of transformation in which perhaps traditional Jewish formulas exercised

¹ 1 Cor. 8: 6

influence.¹ In any case, we cannot be certain that the creed was extended in this manner just to rebut the gnostic separation of the highest God from the creator of the world: although it is probable that at a later date this extension served as a token of orthodox Christianity in the struggle with gnosticism. It is also uncertain whether, in the second article, the description of Christ as the "only begotten" (*monogenes*) was introduced with a polemical purpose. It goes back to John's gospel² and was hardly ever used in the early period; but amongst the Valentinians³ it was used to describe the first emanation from the highest pair of deities, which emanation was distinguished from Christ. The confession of faith in the identity of Christ and Monogenes might have been asserted against this.⁴ In any case, it is still worth noticing that the two earliest creeds of the west do not use the term *monogenes*,⁵ from which fact it follows that the term does not belong to the very earliest stratum in the structure of the Creed.

On the other hand, the extensions in the second article operated in exactly the same way as in Rome: they were concerned to explain the two predicates "Son of God" and "Lord", and probably the Roman creed was the instigation. From the theological standpoint, however, the east moved along other paths. Rome explained the divine Sonship by simply linking it up with the idea of the Virgin birth, an idea which could be understood by the people; but the orient went back to the process of birth before the world began, a process which separated the Son from every creature conditioned by time. Only at a later date did forms of the creed refer directly to the Johannine conception of the logos. The difference in the explanation of the name of the Son is maintained throughout, and permanently distinguishes the eastern creeds from the western forms determined by Rome. The second extension of the basic form, by introducing the references to the Passion and Ascension, survives in a shorter form than in Rome. In particular, it omits the sitting at the right hand, thereby obscuring the

¹ Cf. Col. 1: 16. Ps. 146: 6. Josephus, *c. Apion*, 2,121. Hermas, *Mand.*, 1,1 and *ZNW*. 21,8 f.

² John 1: 14, 18; 3: 16, 18

³ Cf. Vol. 1, pp. 287 ff.

⁴ *ZNW*. 22,277 f. 26, 90 f. *Iren.* 1,10,3. Kattenbusch, *Apost. Symbol.*, 2,581-596

⁵ *ZNW*. 21,11

reference to Phil. 2, and consequently also the explanation of the title of "Lord". The two additions are very clear and definite in Rome; but, in the east, only in a weakened form, and in general terms. Instead, during the following period, a very much ranker growth of new forms developed out of this root in the eastern church, whereas the west everywhere accepted the Roman confession, and indeed in its Latin translation,¹ and developed it further with relative restraint.

The simplest form of the third article has been preserved in the orient. Even in this article, however, extensions were introduced at an early date, partly in the form that described the Holy Ghost as the promised paraclete,² or else as the spirit active in the prophets and pointing towards Christ;³ partly also by adding other dogmas like church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection, and eternal life: we have already discussed these formulas.⁴ Naturally the purpose of these additions is to emphasize the faith that the matters mentioned are due to the activity of the Holy Spirit.

As was the case with the episcopal office and the New Testament canon, so also the confession of faith arose from needs felt entirely within the Church: only in quite isolated cases is it possible to suppose that the efficient cause of any particular formula was hostility towards gnostics or other heretics. The formulas, while in process of gradual extension, only took the fundamental doctrines of the Old Testament and the most important dogmas of Christendom, and made of them a series of titles for the separate sections in which the catechumens were to be instructed. The words of the creed are brief and epigrammatic, and are to be explained by the teacher; and, vice versa, the needs felt in the course of teaching the faith, introduced new words or phrases into the text of the creed. Moreover, the Creed after the second century was not a stiff formula, but a living and changeable form of expressing the church's doctrine; and it retained this character—in the east more definitely than in the west—for several centuries more. The illusion that there was an ancient creed, formulated in a

¹ *ZNW*. 21,4 f.

² Tert., *Adv. Prax.*, 2

³ Justin, *Apol.*, 13,3. 61,13. Iren. 1,10,1. *Vide supra*, p. 110; cf. *ZNW*. 26,93

⁴ *Supra*, pp. 109 f.

fixed manner, has long led scholars astray. As a matter of fact, in the whole of the ancient church there are not two writers who quote one and the same creed, and even one and the same church father formulates his "creed" differently on different occasions: hence the numerous forms of creed which meet us in the ancient sources,¹ and which are constantly being increased by new discoveries. The confession of faith was from top to bottom part of the liturgy of the Church, and it shared in the spiritual freedom of a living liturgy as long as this freedom existed²—i.e. until the Middle Ages: only then did it crystallize out into the unalterable fixed form which afforded no more room for new expressions of life.

The confession of the "Rule of Faith", therefore, signified much more for the Church than what is conveyed by the mere words: in every sentence the baptized Christian heard an echo of the Church's explanation which he had received in the process of instruction as a catechumen. Only when we take full account of this fact are we able to grasp how this simple and unphilosophical declaration could act as a protection against the dazzling speculations of gnostic thinkers. Irenaeus and Tertullian give us some conception of what could be deduced by penetrating exegesis from the simple "Rule of Faith" as "the canon of truth". They show also how this rule, together with its explanation, was honoured, carefully protected, and handed down by the Church as a legacy from the Apostles;³ indeed, they traced it back to Christ himself, and described it as the teaching of the Holy Spirit who had brought together all truth in this "Christian oath of fidelity to the colours".⁴ Even if the Apostles had left no writings, i.e. even if we had no canon of the New Testament, this tradition alone would be sufficient to guarantee the faith of the church: that was the view of Irenaeus.⁵

Hence we may regard the creed as a compendium of the theology of the Church, and we may gather from it what propositions were regarded at that time as the crucial principal doctrines of Christianity. From the various ways in which the

¹ Brought together in Hahn, *op. cit.*, and Lietzmann, *Symbole (Kl. Texte, 17–18)*

² ZNW. 26, 84 f.

³ Iren. 1, 10, 1 f. 3, 4, 1

⁴ Tert., *de praescr. haer.* 13; *adv. Praxeum*, 2. 30

⁵ Iren. 3, 4, 1

first article was formulated, we gather, first of all, that faith was confessed in a strict monotheism consciously shared with the Jews. The confession of faith in God as the creator of the world was similarly shared with the synagogue, and also as a rule the invisible spiritual world was expressly mentioned side by side with the material world; this form of creed proved to be a practicable bulwark against the doctrines of Marcion and the gnostics, who preferred to separate the creator of the world from the highest God. But the deduction was also made that the creator God was identical with the God of the Old Testament, and thus gnostic speculations about the pleroma were warded off;¹ in particular the second article was felt to guarantee the activity of the Son in the prophets before the preaching of the gospel.²

It is significant that the two earliest pronouncements of the creed about God were scarcely the subject of debate. His omnipotence appeared as the obvious presupposition of His creative activity³ and, for this reason, was not expressly discussed: it was simply a predicate of majesty.⁴ And when God is described as "Father" as a rule the implication is not that Jesus was His Son, but rather the point in mind is His relation to the entire world: He is the Father of the whole,⁵ and is called Father on account of His love, Lord on account of His power, our Creator and Maker on account of His wisdom.⁶ To call the creator of the world Father was common to Christianity, Hellenistic Judaism,⁷ and the philosophic enlightened religion which warranted men tracing back the term to the Homeric "father of gods and men".⁸ Therefore this article came to be understood in the sense of a general monotheism, and the churches then no longer felt any connection with the popular Jewish belief which described God as the Father of Israel.⁹

Nowadays, more than ever, is it felt to be strange that the second article is so completely silent about the life and teaching of Jesus, and that it concentrates all our attention on the birth,

¹ *Iren.* 1,22,1; cf. 2,1,1. 2,9,1

² *Iren.* 3,10,6–11,1. 3,12,9

³ Justin, *Dial.*, 16,4. 38,2

⁴ *Ibid.* 83,4. 96,3. 142,2.

Iren. 2,6,2

⁵ Justin, *Apol.*, 13,1. 45,1. 61,3. 10. *App.* 6,2. 9,2

⁶ *Iren.* 5,17,1 (2,369); cf. 2,35,3 (1,387)

⁷ *III Macc.* 2,21. 5,7. Philo frequently; cf. index Vol. 7, 636 f.

⁸ *Epictet.* 1,3,1. 1,9,7. 1,19,12. 3,24,15 f. Cf. Justin, *Ap.*, 22,1

⁹ Bousset, *Judentum*, 3rd edit., 377 f.

death, and second advent of the Lord. To the mind of the early Church, however, that concentration was entirely necessary. The life and teaching of the Master was for the Christian the model of, and pointer to, the Christian life, and the teaching given to the catechumen made him sufficiently acquainted with it. But the acts and sayings of Jesus only received their authority and their real meaning on the metaphysical basis of His person and its place in the divine plan of redemption—the “economy of salvation”: this above all else had to be made impregnably firm, and then everything else would follow as a matter of course. It would be a very bad mistake, if we were to conclude from its absence in the passages just mentioned, that ethics was regarded as of lesser value; we may notice that the “Rule of Faith” is equally silent about the sacraments, the decisive significance of which no one would venture to deny; but all their efficacy was derived from a right understanding of the person of the Lord. It was this fact, therefore, which had to be established in the first place.

Hence the second article begins with the confession that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The title of “Christ” had long become a proper noun in the Church, and only those who were versed in the Scriptures could explain it from the Old Testament; the name “Lord” had also faded, and lost its original power. The imagery clearly conveyed, however, by the term “Son of God”, withstood the dulling effect of use, and inspired men ever anew to build up speculative theological systems. It would appear as if the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3: 23–38 has preserved a naïve attempt at such a theology when it attempts to trace the ancestry to Adam, the “son of God”; thus it facilitates the ascription of divine sonship to Jesus, by taking the round-about way to Adam, who, indeed, is His prototype. The doctrine that the birth of Jesus was effected by God from the Virgin Mary enjoyed, on the other hand, the very widest acceptance. Matthew and Luke presented it to their readers, Ignatius spoke with emphasis of the secret,¹ and, in the Roman baptismal creed, the clause “born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary” is the authoritative explanation of the title, Son.

¹ Ign., *ad Eph.*, 19,1.; *ad Smyrn.* 1,1

The ancient world was familiar with the practice of explaining an incomprehensibly exalted personality by ascribing divine fatherhood; it was the universal custom amongst the people even in the time of the Empire.¹ Plutarch claimed to know a teaching of the Egyptians, according to which the spirit of a god was in a position to approach a woman and plant in her the nucleus of growth.² That a woman who had been blessed in this way by the godhead was a virgin would be the natural assumption as a rule, so long as a married woman was not expressly named as the mother of the miraculous child: it must remain an open question, however, to what extent this series of ideas had been influenced by a myth, for which there are evidences in Egypt and Arabia, to the effect that at the winter solstice the goddess, Kore (the maiden), or Parthenos (the virgin), bore the sun-god.³ In any case, the pagan world of those days was probably familiar with the idea of virgin births due to divine causation.

Moreover, ideas of this sort were not strange even to the Jews. Granted that they cannot be found among the rabbis of Palestine, yet the Hellenistic Judaism of the diaspora was familiar with miraculous propagation by God's direct intervention. Philo⁴ tells his readers a great secret, and then records, of four women in Biblical history, that God impregnated them miraculously: Sarah, Leah, Rebecca, and Zipporah; in the last-mentioned case he says emphatically that "when Moses took her to himself, he discovered she was pregnant, but not by a mortal man"—the parallel to the story of Joseph in Matt. 1: 18, is unmistakable. From this standpoint, what Paul has to say in Gal. 4: 21–31 receives a new light, and shows us that even he held that, as distinct from the "natural" birth of Ishmael, Isaac was begotten miraculously, by divine operation. It follows that Paul was acquainted with the same tradition of the Hellenistic rabbis as lies at the basis of Philo's discussions;⁵ and when, in this connection, Philo asserts that God would grant His miraculous gift only to a pure virgin, we are at once

¹ H. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, 2nd edit., 71–77.

² Plutarch, *Numa*, 4; *Quaest. conv.* 8, 1 p. 718b. Cf. E. Norden, *Geburt des Kindes*, 78.

³ Epiphanius, *Hær.*, 51, 22, 8–11 (2, 285–7 Holl.). Cf. Holl, *Ges. Aufs.*, 2, 144–46.

⁴ Philo, *Cher.*, 45–50 (1, 181 f.)

⁵ M. Dibelius, *Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind*, 27–37, 42 f.

reminded of the pagan conceptions mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

In reality, these ideas belong to an ancient religion of nature, probably of Egypt origin,¹ and we find them applied to the Bible by Hellenized Jews. This fact, however, at once makes it clear how a Christian man who came from such circles must have understood the prophecy in Isa. 7: 14. His Greek text read: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: lo, a virgin (*parthenos*) will conceive and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel." To him, that was the prophetic announcement of the miraculous birth of Jesus the Son of God from the Virgin Mary. The doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus was, therefore, in those days, felt to be, not only of the most graphic simplicity, but was also founded on the New Testament; as a result it rapidly and inevitably became universal. The narratives of Matthew and Luke plainly show that they refer to the passage in Isaiah,² and in this way they brought to the Church the happy consciousness of the harmony between the prophecy and its fulfilment. Justin the apologist demonstrates that fact with obvious satisfaction, and expounds it to the Jew Trypho with a detailed discussion of all problems of scripture.³

Side by side with this doctrine of the physically divine sonship of Jesus, was another theory which it is usual to call "adoptionist". In its simplest form, the theory declared that the man Jesus was made into the Son of God by the descent of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, and that, at the end of His life, He was raised from the dead as a reward for His good works, and exalted to the right hand of God. This doctrine has not been actually preserved in its pure form: but the western text of Luke's gospel,⁴ giving in all probability the genuine, original wording, records, in 3: 22, that, when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, a voice from heaven was heard saying: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." That is unmistakably a divine testimony, modelled on the basis of Ps. 2:7, and bearing witness to the "adoption" of the man, Jesus, as Son of God. The same view is clearly expressed in the interpolations found in the

¹ Dibelius 44, Norden 79

³ Justin, *Apol.*, 33; *Dial.* 66-85

² Matt. 1: 23; Luke 1: 31

⁴ Usener, *op. cit.*, 40-52

Jewish *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,¹ whereas in the best known representative of adoptionist Christology, Hermas,² who wrote in Rome c. A.D. 150, the original form has undergone a certain transformation. According to Hermas, Jesus was a man of virtue to the extent of being sinless, and He had won God's good pleasure. The Holy Spirit of God united with Jesus, and since, during His work on earth, He served with a pure heart and laboured together with the Spirit, God rewarded Jesus and exalted Him to the heavenly throne where, with the Holy Spirit and the high angels, He became His counsellor.

In content, the earlier Adoptionism has been preserved here, and it may well be an accident that the Baptism is not mentioned. But the Holy Spirit is described by Hermas as the "Son of God", both in this connection and also elsewhere, i.e. the Holy Spirit is regarded as the pre-existent divine being who had formerly created the world, and who, after the Resurrection, separately from the risen Jesus, asserted His own original dignity as Son. In this case, therefore, the earlier Adoptionism has been combined with another, i.e. a pneumatic, conception of the Son. Somewhat similarly, Paul, in Phil. 2, takes a conception which is really Adoptionist in character, and originally applies only to man, because it consists of an exaltation granted as reward for obedient service; Paul combines this idea with that of the descent of a pre-existent divine being: this view brings us face to face with the same thing the other way round.

A "pneumatic" Christology became dominant in the Church. This Christology held that the "Son of God" was a spiritual being existing from the beginning with God, and that He appeared on earth at a pre-appointed time, in human form; He lived, taught, and worked miracles in Palestine as Jesus Christ; finally, after having suffered death on the cross, He rose again and ascended to heaven in order to reassume there His appropriate place. The conception is to be found in Paul and in John's doctrine of the logos, and through them it became normative for the future. The oriental forms of the baptismal creed expressly emphasized the doctrine of sonship in the

¹ *Test. Iudeæ* 24,1 f.; cf. *Zabulon* 9,8

² Hermas, *Sim.*, 5,6,4–8. 9,1,1. 9,12,1–8

form of the logos instead of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth: not in the sense of denying the Virgin Birth so much as in that of accepting the logos sonship as primary. This doctrine says nothing as to the way in which the logos became incarnate. A naïve docetism came to be based on the logos Christology, and a merely apparent body ascribed to the divine being while on earth; on the other hand, the spirit could be conceived as the divine companion dwelling with the man Jesus who was destined for adoption; this is the view held by Hermas. But the solution of the problem which became most usual in the Church was the one in which the pneumatic Christology was combined with the doctrine of the miraculous birth in such a way that the divine spirit, or the logos, entered into the Virgin Mary, and through her became a genuine man. In the world of ideas of the early Church and its theologians, all these ways of thought intermingled, or were to be found unco-ordinated side by side: what modern logical analysis separates neatly, stood closely together in the life and thought of the early Christians, and did so for the most part without any sign of clash; but, in the course of time, theologians became aware of hidden incongruities, and attempted to find a genuine agreement: this work of theirs led to the evolution of dogma within the Church.

The pronouncement made in the second half of the second article, both in Rome and the orient, constituted a connected series of assertions: Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Advent in order to judge the world, i.e. the drama of redemption as found in the "economy of salvation" past and future. These were the works of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in which His divine power as Redeemer stood revealed: the first decisive act took place in the realm of history: the crucifixion "under Pontius Pilate". Thereupon Jesus left the scene of earth: the work of redemption became illuminated by eschatology, and was to be completed in the Last Judgment. What, however, was the purpose of the economy of salvation? It was conceived from the standpoint of warfare between God and the devil: Jesus had broken the chains of the devil, trodden hell down, freed mankind from death,¹ and had shown that the way

¹ The prayer in the Church Order of Hippolytus (Lietzm., *Messe u. Herrenm.*, 42)

to resurrection lay in following in His steps.¹ This victory was made possible by outwitting antagonists who had attacked Jesus without suspecting that they had no claim on this sinless man, but were to meet with the unconquerable power of God in him. This theology is popular and graphic; it was given a simple, vivid form, and was very much alive in the churches. It formed part of the earliest tradition of doctrine, was accepted by gnostics as well as by thinkers within the Church, and was developed further.²

The third article opens with confessing the Holy Spirit revealed in the churches, a confession which, in the course of time, was given manifold and various theological explanations in proportion as the original Christian view of the operation of the spirit fell into the background behind the regular ordinances of the Church. The spirit was identified with the divine being operative in Christ—such as we have just discussed in the case of Hermas,³ corresponding to the adoptionist view as well as to the conception of Jesus's miraculous procreation; Paul could be called in as support, particularly 2 Cor. 3: 17. On the other hand, the spirit was conceived as an independent divine being side by side with the Father and the logos in a manner deduced from the Johannine conception of the paraclete,⁴ a conception which also corresponded to the three-fold structure of the creed: in this way the spirit became a third divine person. In the context of the creed, on the one hand, the function of the Holy Spirit was described as strengthening the life and faith of the Church⁵—this corresponded to the Johannine doctrine and the earliest meaning of the formula. On the other hand, emphasis was laid upon the activity of the spirit in the prophets, an activity which pointed towards Christ.⁶

¹ Ign., *Trall.*, 9; *Smyrn.* 1,2; Iren. 1,10,1 (1,91) and Iren. Armen., *Epideixis* (p. 4 Harnack, cf. *ZNW*, 26,93). *Didasc. Syr.* 6,23,8 in Funk, p. 382

² Paul, 1 Cor. 2:7 f.; Col. 2: 15. Ign., *Eph.*, 19,1; cf. Justin, *Apol.*, 54. 55. Basilides in Iren. 1,24,4 (1,200). Origen, in *Mt.*, tom. 16,8 (4,27 Lo) and frequently

³ Cf. also 2 *Clem.* 14: 4

⁴ Vol. 1, 231 f.

⁵ Tert., *praescr. haer.* 13. *adv. Praxeum* 2. Iren. 4,33,7 (2,262). 4. Antiochene creed, 1. Creed of Epiph., cf. Lietzmann, *Symbole (Kl. Texte 17 and 18)*, 6,19.31 and *ZNW*. 21,20 f.

⁶ Justin, *Apol.*, 13,3. 61,13. Iren. 1,10,1 (1,90). *Epideixis* 6 (p. 4, ed. Harnack, *ZNW*, 26,93). Creeds of Jerusalem, *Epiph.*, 1 and 2, etc.; cf. *ZNW*. 21,20 f.

The remaining parts of the article came in at a later date and in a varied selection; first, perhaps the Church as the organ and the product of the activity of the spirit. On one occasion in Hermas,¹ the Holy Spirit appears in the form of an old lady, viz. the Church, and in *2 Clem.* the preacher takes up the parable of marriage in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, and calls the Church the feminine element beside the masculine of Christ; he also calls the Church the body which forms a unity with Christ as Spirit.² The resurrection of the flesh is mentioned in the same article in the nine-sectioned creed of Rome and Egypt:³ i.e. the resurrection is the eschatological consequence of the possession of the spirit; it takes place in the individual believer, and is what he hoped to gain by following in the train of Christ in the Church. The creed of the *Epistula Apostolorum*⁴ places the forgiveness of sins, instead of the resurrection of the body, after the mention of the Church. Naturally the forgiveness referred to is that which is granted in baptism; and in the baptismal creed, there is good reason for saying that it was a subject of faith. The final form of the Roman creed combined all these elements: no further additions were made to the third article in the early period—which is quite striking, especially when we think of the Lord's Supper.

¹ Hermas, *Sim.*, 9,1,1; cf. *Visions* 3. Dibelius in *Handb.* exc. on *Vis.* 2,3,4

² *2 Clem.* 14; cf. *Eph.* 1: 23, 5: 32

³ *Supra*, p. 110

⁴ *Supra*, pp. 92 f.

Chapter Five

WORSHIP

THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TO BE FOUND IN THE act of public worship. This is the occasion when the powers of the world beyond flow into Christian people, and transform them into the new children of God; they are no longer of this world, but even here live in a supernatural fellowship with the heavenly citizens of the kingdom of God. The principal element in its worship is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. We have already discussed its earliest form in the original Church; it was a community meal, and Paul ascribed to it the significance of a memorial feast of the death of Christ.¹ On the threshold of the second century, the Church Order of the *Didache*² preserves the earliest formulated liturgy of the Lord's Supper. The sacred rite was still always combined with a genuine meal in common, although the two acts, of eating and drinking, were no longer separated by the course of the entire meal, but were placed together at the beginning of the rite. The leader blessed the cup, then the bread, with brief prayers which obviously owed their origin to the forms used in the Greek synagogues, although they had received a content showing Christian influence. Then the leader cried: "Grace is coming and this world is passing away." "Hosanna to the Son of David" was the response of the church. Then came the admonition: "If any is holy let him enter, if he is not let him repent. Marana tha (Come, O Lord)." "Amen", responded the Church, and thereupon those who were baptized, and believed themselves holy, i.e. free from serious sin, attended the communion service conducted by the leader of the liturgy. Whoever had a quarrel with his neighbour first came to agreement with him. Then the Church came to table, and the common meal began. At its end, the leader offered a longer prayer of thanks for the spiritual food which they had enjoyed, and for eternal life granted through Christ: the prayer ended with a petition on behalf of the

¹ Vol. I, pp. 63, 124, 150 f.

² *Did.*, 9–10. 14. Lietzmann, *Messe u. Herrenm.*, pp. 230–8.

Church scattered far and wide in the world, but patiently waiting for its reunion in the Kingdom of God. No word was uttered about remembering the death of the Lord; no reminder of the Lord's Last Supper on the night when He was betrayed.

This liturgy is entirely confined to the tradition which had grown up from the very earliest period, and is unaffected by Pauline influence. Nevertheless it did not last much longer in the Church. Two matters brought about a crucial change. On the one hand, Paul's authority became so overwhelming that his words determined the meaning and the content of the rite. On the other hand, the connection broke down between the sacramental meal and a common repast of the church. The former was separated from its proximity with the daily, evening meal, which appeared in some way to be mundane; it was transferred to the morning, and united with the preaching service. This change was complete in Rome c. A.D. 150, as we see from Justin the apologist.¹

The earlier, evening celebrations were not abolished, but they lost their old meaning, and became love-feasts of a semi-liturgical character, as formalized acts of personal goodwill. A few descriptions² of this kind of "Agapē" have survived. Tertullian describes them³ as forms of social meeting of which the church was fond, and in which a modest meal of food and drink was followed by a general discussion, the reading of Biblical passages, singing of psalms, or unfettered speech. In Rome,⁴ about the same time, needy members of the church received meals in some well-to-do house. A cleric conducted the proceedings, offered prayer, and broke the bread at the beginning: this was described as the "Eulogia", and was distinguished from partaking of the Lord's Supper, the "Eucharistia". Then came the common meal. On the other hand, the entire rite might be dispensed with; instead, the person officiating gave small packets of food into the hands of those who had been invited, and who then took the packets gratefully away. In this modest form, the Agapē lived for

¹ Justin, *Apol.*, 67,3–5

² Material is given in Lietzmann, *op. cit.*, 197–202. English trans. *The Mass and the Lord's Supper*

³ Tert., *Apol.*, 39,16

⁴ *Didasc. apost.*, ed. Hauler, pp. 113 f.

centuries apart from the formal liturgy and worship of the Church.

It is in the writings of the same Justin, who tells of the combination of the two elements to form the principal public service on Sundays, that we find the earliest description of the method followed: the church assembled on Sunday and heard readings, first from the gospel, then from the prophets "for as long as there was time": a hortatory sermon followed. That was the extent of the first part, i.e. the preaching-service, according to this very brief record—but even the accounts given in the Church Orders of the fourth century¹ are no fuller. By this time, the service was rather more divided up, and, in particular, psalms were sung between the two readings from the Bible; otherwise, however, we have no further information. We notice, especially, that no liturgical prayer is mentioned in the first part of the service. On the other hand, it is clear that, by now, there had been a change from the service customary in the synagogues, where readings of Scripture were combined with teaching in the manner which is graphically described in Luke 4: 16–30. On that occasion, Jesus read on the Sabbath the prophetic passage Isa. 61: 1 f. and preached about it. Similarly, Acts 13: 14–16 speaks of reading on the Sabbath from the Law and the prophets, followed by an address: the *Mishna*² fills out these notices by saying that the reading from the prophets took place only at the morning service on the Sabbath, and followed on the readings from the Law. We know so little of anything else in this part of the service in the synagogue, and, in particular, have no information at all as to its form on Hellenistic soil, that it is scarcely possible for us to go beyond the few notices which we have just remarked.

All the members of the church shared in the first part of divine service,³ and, indeed, strangers were admitted in order that they might be converted to Christianity; on the other hand, the second part was confined to those who had been baptized, for they alone were permitted to partake in the Lord's Supper which constituted the centre of the rite. It follows that, at an early period, a more or less clearly-marked departure of

¹ *Const. Apost.* 2,57,5–9. 8,5,11 f.

² *Mishna Megilla* 4,2; cf. Elbogen, *Jüd. Gottesdienst*, 176

³ *Const. Apost.* 8,6,2

catechumens and unbelievers concluded the first part of the service. When the congregation of the baptized were quite in private, they began to offer general prayer, and afterwards greeted one another with the kiss of peace. Then bread and a cup of mixed wine and water was brought to the leader, who pronounced over them the "Eucharist prayer". The people responded with "Amen", and then received Communion from the hands of the deacons. The central point of this service, however, was not really the meal, the partaking of the consecrated elements, but the act of consecration itself which was brought about by the Eucharist prayer. From the Roman church, c. A.D. 200, there has been preserved the actual wording of one of these formularies,¹ and everything essential can be clearly inferred from it:

Bishop: The Lord be with you.
 Church: And with thy spirit.
 Bishop: Lift up your hearts.
 Church: We have them in the Lord.
 Bishop: Let us give thanks to the Lord.
 Church: That is proper and right.
 Bishop: We thank Thee God through Thy beloved servant Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent in the latter times to be our Saviour and Redeemer and the messenger of Thy counsel, the Logos who went out from Thee, through whom Thou hast created all things, whom Thou wast pleased to send out from heaven into the womb of the Virgin, and in her body He became incarnate and shown to be Thy Son born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin. In order to fulfil Thy will and to make ready for Thee a holy people, He spread out his hands when He suffered in order that He might free from sufferings those who have reached faith in Thee. And when He gave Himself over to voluntary suffering, in order to destroy death, and to break the bonds of the devil, and to tread down hell, and to illuminate the righteous, and to set up the boundary stone, and to reveal the Resurrection, He took bread, gave thanks, and said: "Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you." In the same manner also the cup, and said:

¹ Hipp., *Church Order in Didascalia lat.* ed. Hauler, pp. 106 f.

"This is My blood which is poured out for you. As often as you do this you keep My memory."

When we remember His death and His resurrection in this way, we bring to Thee the bread and the cup, and give thanks to Thee, because Thou hast thought us worthy to stand before Thee and to serve Thee as priests.

And we beseech Thee that Thou wouldest send down Thy Holy Spirit on the sacrifice of the church. Unite it, and grant to all the saints who partake in the sacrifice, that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit, that they may be strengthened in faith in the truth, in order that we may praise and laud Thee through Thy servant, Jesus Christ, through whom praise and honour be to Thee in Thy holy church now and forever more, Amen.

This formulary begins with the "Eucharistia", i.e. thanks, not, as in the case of the early prayers at table, for material food, but for the incarnation of the divine logos in Jesus who had instituted this sacred meal on the eve of His Passion, as is re-echoed in the words of Paul and of Matthew. The words of institution end with the admonition: "As often as you do this, you keep My memory." The following words take up this phrase, and more exactly define the death and resurrection of the Lord as the subjects of such memorial. Bread and wine are described as the sacrificial gifts, which are brought in a priestly manner, and offered to God. In addition, it is in a thoroughly ancient manner, even making use of Old Testament forms, that the priest beseeches the Lord to let His Spirit descend upon the sacrifice, in order that it may serve as spiritual food for those who partake. The elements of the Lord's Supper are like the flesh of the sacrificial animal which was eaten in a feast by those who offered it, and by the priest after the act of worship had taken place. In the prayer of the liturgy, this conception received a spiritual transformation, but from Justin's explanation we see how much earthly reality was combined with it in the religious feelings of the people: Justin speaks of the transformation of our flesh and blood when we partake of this food which has been blessed by invoking the logos.¹ It is the same

¹ Justin, *Apol.*, 66,2; cf. *Dial.* 41,1-3. 70,4. 117,1-5

conception as we find, c. A.D. 110, in Ignatius, and as had already been expounded by Paul to the Corinthian church.¹

The Lord's Supper was the act of sacrifice in the worship offered by Christians: in the first place, because it was Eucharistia, thanksgiving, and because prayers were the peculiarly Christian sacrifices;² in the second place, because bread and wine, and frequently also many other gifts, were brought by the church to the leader at the altar, and thereby sacrificed to God; in the third place, because the leader consecrated the elements to God by his prayers, and God accepted the gift, sent his Holy Spirit upon and in it, and in this way transformed it into miracle-working, sacrificial food for the church.³ This, again, is a conception whose roots can be traced back to the parallel and the contrast, which Paul drew between the Lord's Supper and Jewish and pagan sacrificial meals.⁴ Thus there are three points in which it is comprehensible why the rite of the Lord's Supper was described as the Christian act of sacrifice.⁵

The Christians quite consciously took the conception of the true Israel, and carried it further: they no longer set against the Old Testament sacrifice merely the single offering on Golgotha, as in Hebrews, but worked out their own regularly-repeated act of worship in the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the sequel, we shall discuss how, at a later date, accommodation was effected with the conception found in Hebrews, a conception which laid the basis for the classical theory of sacrifice in the Roman Catholic church. In the second century, meanwhile, we can only trace the three conceptions of sacrifice which we have just discussed. Since a priest was necessary to make a sacrifice, the person who led the liturgy of the church was described with the Old Testament title of priest. Even Clement of Rome drew the parallel between the bishop and deacons on the one hand, and the high-priests, priests, and Levites on the other; the *Didache* describes the prophets as the Christian high-priests.⁶ About A.D. 200, there are passages comparing the bishop with the high-priest, and the presbyters with the

¹ Cf. Vol. I, 124 f., 238

² Justin, *Dial.*, 117,2

³ *Messe u. Herrenm.* 176-86

⁴ 1 Cor. 10: 18-21

⁵ *Didache* 14,1. Justin, *Dial.*, 117,1 f.; cf. 1 Clem. 40,2 44,4, and Ign., *Eph.*, 5,2

⁶ 1 Clem. 40: 5. *Did.* 13,3

priests; shortly afterwards, the deacons are equated with the Levites.¹

This act of worship bound the Church ever more closely together into a spiritual unity: that unity was reflected also in the custom of bringing the consecrated food home to absent members, lest any be excluded. After the rite, the leader collected the gifts made to meet the needs of charity, their distribution being under his oversight. It was also a frequent custom to bring food of all sorts, and indeed flowers, place them as offerings upon the altar, and have them blessed by the laying on of hands, and the prayer of the priest: in the Church Order of Hippolytus² the corresponding forms of prayer have been preserved, and the Mosaic floor of the oldest-surviving basilica gives us a pictorial representation of a procession bringing such gifts as sacrifices.³

It was one and the same loaf of which they all ate, one wine of which they all drank; these foods were a counterpart—"antitypus"—of the body and the blood of the Lord, and thus united participants "with the body of Christ". Because the elements now bore a supernatural character, they must be treated with respect: no unbeliever must share in them, no crumb must fall to the ground lest it be destroyed, or a mouse eat it; no drop must be spilt: an intrusive spirit might lick it up and so obtain heavenly powers.⁴

During the period when a fixed form was being given to the liturgy of the Lord's Supper, the initiatory sacrament of baptism reached maturity. Out of the simple act which was sometimes performed without an intermediary, there grew up a series of solemn actions following a definite plan. In the first place, the time was closely determined. In Bithynia, c. A.D. 100, and in Rome, even c. A.D. 200, it was usual to prescribe night-time between Saturday and Sunday for the baptismal ceremony, the particular reason being that it was the weekly recurrence of the night in which the Lord rose again.⁵ Then

¹ Tert., *de bapt.*, 17 Hippol., *Elenchos* 1 preface. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. Connolly, p. 86, 12–19. p. 87, 10–17

² Hipp., *Church Order*, c. 53, p. 114, ed. Funk

³ The basilica of Aquileia which was built about A.D. 310. For illustrations see *Vorträge der Bibl. Warburg*, 1925–26, p. 59, and plate 5

⁴ Hipp., *Church Order*, c. 60, p. 116, ed. Funk

⁵ Pliny, *Epist.*, 10, 96. Hippolytus, *Church Order*, can. 45 f., p. 109, Funk

the limits were made still narrower, and Easter night was chosen as the time for baptism, and as an annual memorial of the night of our redemption by Christ: if there were not sufficient time or space, the whole of the period of rejoicing in the fifty days till Whitsuntide could be used for baptism. Tertullian¹ says that that was the usual custom, c. A.D. 200, in the African church. We have no information of similar limitations in the orient, about this time, but they must necessarily have been introduced as soon as it became a settled custom to give detailed instruction to those who sought baptism, and when catechumens were no longer taught individually, but general instruction was given to all the candidates in common. The *Didache* describes a very brief course of instruction in ethics as sufficient teaching; according to Justin, it is probable that a more detailed Christian teaching was presupposed, but he utters not a single word about a regular syllabus. This also applies to the Church Order of Hippolytus, in which we find that the probationary period for catechumens was prescribed as fully three years: the thing to be tested during this period was the manner of life and the moral firmness of the candidate.²

The baptismal rite itself was fully developed as early as c. A.D. 200, and was accompanied by a number of ceremonies reflecting nature religion, ceremonies which must have had numerous parallels in the surrounding mystery religions. The candidate for baptism was made ready by a fast which lasted one or two days, and which was shared by certain friends.³ Then the baptismal water was purified by exorcizing the elemental spirits which dwelt in it, and was prepared for the sacred ceremony.⁴ Side by side with this view, however, was the belief that the candidate himself was the dwelling-place of the unseen spirits of paganism, and that he must be freed from them before the spirit of Christ could dwell in him. The simplest view was that the baptism itself effected the purification,⁵ but,

¹ Tert., *de baptismo*, 19

² *Did.* 1-6; cf. 7 at the beginning. Justin, *Apol.*, 61,1. Funk, *op. cit.*, c. 42, p. 107

³ *Did.* 7,4. Justin, *Apol.*, 61,2; cf. Funk, *op. cit.*, 45,7. 10. p. 109; cf. Clem. Alex., *excerpt.*, 84.

⁴ Clem. Alex., *loc. cit.*, 82. Cyprian, *ep.*, 70,1. Funk, *op. cit.*, 46,1. p. 109; cf. Dölger, *Exorzismus*, p. 160-67

⁵ Tert., *de bapt.*, 9. p. 208, 11 f.; cf. 5. p. 205,26 f. Reifferscheid.

in the third century, a special rite of exorcism was drawn up, by means of which the daemons were driven out of the baptismal candidate in advance. The priest placed his hand upon him, blew on him, anointed his forehead, ears, and nose: this was followed by a renewed fast for the night.¹ Early in the morning, at cock-crow, the baptism began; "living," i.e. flowing, water was necessary, a prescription which corresponded to the general requirements of ancient cults. Only in case of necessity might cistern water be used.²

In Rome, c. A.D. 200, after the candidate for baptism had undressed, he was required first of all solemnly to abjure Satan and all his service and works, to which hitherto he had been subject; thereupon he was once more anointed with the exorcizing oil. Then he went down into the water, and gave the new oath of service, the "sacramentum", to his new Lord by uttering the three-fold baptismal creed, whereupon he was plunged three times beneath the water by the accompanying deacon. He rose from the water, was anointed by the presbyter, and then re-clothed himself. Afterwards, all passed from the place of baptism into the church, where the bishop transferred the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized by laying on of hands, anointing, making the sign of the cross, and a kiss: in this way the bishop received them into the fellowship of the church of Christ.³ The church immediately celebrated the Lord's Supper with them: but, in addition to the bread and wine, a cup of milk and honey was given to those who had been newly-born in baptism—they were to regard it as a foretaste of the heavenly food which was assured to the glorified in the promised land of the Kingdom of God. We have testimonies showing that this rite was practised, c. A.D. 200, in Egypt, and Africa; it may have been taken over in gnostic circles on the Nile from the ancient usage in the mysteries, and thence have penetrated into the Church.⁴

¹ Funk, *op. cit.*, 45,9 f. p. 109

² *Did.* 7,1 f. Justin, *Apol.*, 61,3. Funk, *op. cit.*, 46,2. p. 109. P. Stengel, *Griech. Kultusaltertümer*, 3rd edit., p. 162, note 9

³ Hippolytus, *Church Order*, c. 46, pp. 109–12. Tert., *de. bapt.*, 7 f. *carnis resurr.*, 8, p. 36 f. Kroymann

⁴ Hippolytus, *Church Order* lat. pp. 111–113 Haurer, c. 46, 1–27, p. 110–112 Funk. Clem. Alex., *Paedag.*, 1,6,45. Strom. 7,75,2. Tert. *corona mil.* 3. *adv. Marc.* 1,14, p. 308, 21. Kroymann. H. Usener, *Kleine Schriften*, 4,404–17

From the very beginning, the day for worship in the week was Sunday, and on this day the Eucharistic service was held. Side by side with this, we know that, at an early date, there were two fast days during the week, Wednesday and Friday;¹ in Africa, it was usual to fast until the "ninth hour", i.e. till 3 p.m., whereas the zealous continued their fast until the evening.² Fasting was felt to be an important enhancement of the Christian way of life, a "guard duty", and for this reason the military name, *Statio*, was applied to it in the west.³ The Christian stood "on guard" in order to give the Lord a worthy reception when He returned. But the *Statio* was not regarded as compulsory everywhere. The Roman church in the time of Hippolytus still fasted, as a rule, according to private desire, and fasting was obligatory only on Good Friday and the following day.⁴

In accordance with its respect for the Law, the first church naturally celebrated the Jewish Passover and the festive period of fifty days until Whitsuntide;⁵ these festivals were accepted not only by the Jewish-Christian church which was her successor, but also by the gentile church. In itself, that was not remarkable when we remember how close was the connection between the church which "was free from the Law" and the Greek synagogue,⁶ but it is remarkable that this custom was by no means universal. In the middle of the second century, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, celebrated the feast of the Passover "according to the custom of the Apostles", but only learnt when he visited Rome that it was unknown there, nor was he successful in converting the Romans to this feast.⁷ In Smyrna and the rest of Asia Minor, the Passover was celebrated "on the fourteenth", i.e. exactly on the same day as it began among the Jews, viz. when the moon was fourteen days old, or, in other words, on the night of the full moon, and, in particular, on that after Spring had begun.

Moreover, in the east, there was a large variety of calendars,

¹ Vol. I, 68 ff. *Did.* 8,1

² Tert., *de ieun.*, I p. 275,3 f. 2 p. 275,26–28. 10 p. 287,8. Wissowa

³ Hermas, *Sim.*, 5,1. Tert., *de oratione*, 19 p. 192,11 Wissowa; cf. Svennung, *ZNW.*, 32,294–308. Holl., *Ges. Schr.*, 2,213

⁴ Funk, *op. cit.*, c. 47,2 p. 112. c. 55 p. 115

⁵ *Acts* 2,1; cf. *Lev.* 23,15–21 ⁶ Vol. I, 199 ff. ⁷ Iren. in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,16

and, as we now know,¹ the Jews adopted the calendar which was customary in each particular country; as a consequence, the beginnings of the month were very different, and accordingly the Passover was not celebrated everywhere at the same full moon. That disturbed neither Jews nor Christians. But when the question was raised as to the meaning which both religious communities attached to the observance, there was a sharp contradiction about the very rite. The Jews observed a joyous feast in proud memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Christians observed the Passover by fasting. This must be explained by the parallel instance of fasting on Friday every week. According to the gospel tradition, Jesus' Passion took place in connection with the Passover, and, with this in mind, the Church celebrated Passover Eve in sorrow with fasting and prayer.² When night began to pass away at cock-crow, and the joyous feast of the Jews was at an end, then also the Christian fast, together with its sorrow, came to an end, and the church assembled for the Eucharistic love-feast with the Lord abiding in their midst.³ The content of the Christian Passover celebration, therefore, consisted of a memorial of the death of the Lord, and, later, the Church described this mode as "the Passover of the Cross", and those who observed it, as the "quartodecimanians", according to the date of the feast, i.e. as adherents of the "fourteenth".

As distinct from this practice, another arose which combined the annual memorial of the death of Jesus with the weekly memorial of the same content; for this reason, the observance of the night of Christ's death was made to begin on Saturday, and as a consequence the end of the fasting and the beginning of the Eucharistic festival meal fell at dawn on Sunday, i.e. at the time of Christ's resurrection; in this case, what was really celebrated was the Resurrection, and the previous fasting on Saturday, with its memorial of Christ's death, appeared rather as a preparation for the Sunday festival. Those who carried the analogy of the Passion still further began to fast on Friday, and so celebrated with sorrow the day of Christ's death and also the day when He lay in the grave, but with joy the day of the

¹ E. Schwartz, *Christl. u. jüd Ostertafeln* (*Abh. Götting. Ges. N.F.*, 8, 1905), pp. 126 f.

² Mark 2: 20

³ *Epist. apost. c. 15* (26). M. R. James, *op. cit.*, 489 f.

resurrection. The form of celebration found in Asia Minor joined the Passover to the night of the full moon, and accordingly the Passover fell in turn on each of the days of the week. But the new practice transferred the feast to the Sunday which followed the night of the full moon of the Jewish Passover. We do not know when or where this mode arose; our evidence only shows that, after the middle of the second century, it was widespread in the Christian church.

In particular, about this period, there was a serious dispute as to the proper method of celebrating the Passover, and from Palestine, which agreed with Egypt, from Pontus, from Osroëne, Corinth, Rome, and Gaul, synods wrote officially in favour of the Sunday celebration—what we now call the festival of Easter.¹ Victor, bishop of Rome, then required the churches of Asia Minor to abandon their “quartodecimanian” practice, and threatened them with cessation of church fellowship in case of refusal. But the leading speaker on the other side, Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, defended himself energetically.² He adduced the apostolic tradition of Asia Minor, which was witnessed by the grave of John the beloved disciple, of Philip the evangelist³—whom he raised to the rank of an apostle—and his daughters; he also appealed to quite a large number of important men in the church of his land as having observed the same tradition.

Even elsewhere Rome's abrupt conduct occasioned displeasure,⁴ and Irenæus of Lyons, although he agreed with Victor in subject-matter, wrote a letter in which he was at pains to make his position quite clear. He laid great emphasis on the fact that, even amongst the friends of the Sunday Passover, there were still many differences in detail without this fact disturbing the peace; and that at one time, in the days of Polycarp, the contrast between Rome and Asia Minor had been very much greater. At that time, no one in Rome had celebrated the Passover, a fact that had been peaceably agreed. Why not the same now, when the point at issue was only a difference as to the day? Indeed, Bishop Soter, Victor's predecessor, had been the first to introduce the Easter celebrations

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,23,²⁻⁴

³ Cf. Vol. i, p. 189

² Polycrates' Letter in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,²⁻⁸

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,¹⁰

on a Sunday.¹ We hear nothing of the further stages of the dispute, but, in any case, the churches of Asia Minor did not abandon their custom. Where the new Easter usage was adopted, it sometimes exercised an effect also on the practice of fasting every week, and it added Saturday to the Friday which had long been observed as a fast day. The custom of fasting on Saturday is testified, c. A.D. 200, in the west, as a custom which was warmly contested;² indeed, the dispute lasted 200 years, but the custom was eventually victorious in this province of the church. The east fell into a similar dispute somewhat later, but decided the matter in the opposite direction: after the fourth century Sabbath fasting was forbidden.³

From the very beginning, Whitsuntide depended upon Easter. Consequently, the fifty days which followed upon Easter were celebrated in the church as a period of rejoicing in memory of the appearances of the Risen Lord and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; in particular it was expected that the promised return of the Lord who had ascended to heaven would take place during these weeks.⁴

At this early period, the Church had no other annual festivals. Amongst the followers of Basilides in Egypt in the second century, a feast of the baptism of Christ was observed with a celebration during the preceding night; the date was either January 10 or 6.⁵ At a later date, this gave rise to the feast of the Epiphany in the church catholic, but even in the third century, we can discover no sign that it had yet appeared.

Nevertheless, it is probable that annual feasts were instituted in individual churches, particularly those that celebrated the memory of their martyrs on the anniversary of their death: at bottom, this was a development of the annual tribute which every family was accustomed to offer to the memory of its own departed. It was not without purpose that many gravestones in every century gave particulars of the day of death, whereas the year was mentioned only in the very rarest cases. On this

¹ Letter of Irenaeus in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,12–17. In addition Holl, *op. cit.*, 2,114–19. E. Schwartz, *ZNW.*, 7,1–22

² Tert., *de ieunio*, 14 p. 293,5. 15 p. 293,19 Wissowa. Hippolytus, in *Danielem* 4,20,3. p. 236,5 Bonwetsch

³ Holl, *op. cit.*, 2,373–6

⁴ Tert., *de bapt.*, 19 p. 217,6–12 Wissowa

⁵ Clem., *Strom*, 1,146,1 f.

day, the family gathered at the grave and paid tribute to the memory of the departed in a form regulated in some way by their cult: unfortunately no details are extant in regard to this early period. A later reference shows that Christians made use of the ancient custom of observing the third, ninth, and thirtieth day after the death, by some act of remembrance: on these days, they showed their attachment to the departed by singing psalms, Bible readings, and prayers, in particular by giving alms to the poor, and also probably by a memorial meal,¹ which was naturally celebrated as a Christian agapē, and which gradually was transformed, like the agapē, into acts of charity.² It is not quite clear why the thirtieth day was, in the majority of cases, replaced by the fortieth, but possibly the change was based on the local differences beneath the ancient custom.

An account of such a memorial feast held on the third day has been accidentally preserved from the second century: the relatives entered into the vault in order "to break bread"³ at the grave. Tertullian⁴ frequently mentions a custom observed on the anniversary of a person's death: it was usual "to offer sacrifice for him and to pray for his soul". In this case, the ancient sacrifice, which used to be offered to the dead, had been transformed into a Christian charitable offering that is brought to God, in the name of the dead, at the Eucharist; it was placed upon the bishop's table as if upon the altar,⁵ and accompanied by intercessory prayers.

This kind of worship, in connection with the dead, developed considerably in the case of martyrs, in so far as it was not limited to the circle of family and friends, but was observed by the whole church. How greatly the churches celebrated the martyrs as their heroes, to whom they looked up with pride, is seen from the letters which the churches wrote about Polycarp's death, and about the group of people belonging to Lyons: the letters give a very vivid picture. We are expressly

¹ *Const. Apost.* 8,42,1-5; 44,1-4. Ambrose, *de obitu Theodosii*, 3 (2,1198a Bened.). E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 1,232 ff.

² *Canones Hippol.* 33

³ *Acta Joh.* 72

⁴ Tert., *de corona*, 3; *exhort. cast.* 11; *monogamia*, 10

⁵ Cf. Hippol., *Church Order*, c. 53

assured, in the case of Polycarp, that many wished to secure the corpse and "to have fellowship with his holy flesh"; but the devil prevented it, and brought it about that the body was burnt. As a result, only the ashes were collected and laid aside in a convenient place, and there the church celebrated the anniversary of his martyrdom with joy and gladness.¹ On this day it was also the intention "to remember the earlier martyrs"; the phrase makes it clear that, when the Church instituted a festival for Polycarp, something new was established, and that hitherto the memory of martyrs had not been officially celebrated on behalf of the church. As a matter of fact, it is possible for us to prove, on a documentary basis, that the cult of the martyrs began to be a feast of the church here in Smyrna in the year A.D. 156.

A calendar of martyrs, which has survived from the year A.D. 354, enables us to reach exact conclusions as to the situation in Rome: this list of official memorial-days mentions no martyrs belonging to the first two centuries. The first martyrs whose names are mentioned are the African ladies, Perpetua and Felicitas, who died A.D. 202, and the Roman bishops Callistus (died A.D. 222), Pontianus, and Hippolytus (died after A.D. 235). The African calendar mentions the Scillitans of A.D. 180 as the earliest martyrs; the Syrian martyrology, which drew on various eastern sources, preserves the memory not only of Polycarp, but of Karpos and his fellows, who were martyred, in Pergamon, probably about the same time; and also Ignatius the early bishop of Antioch.² Thus it would appear that the church became accustomed to celebrate martyrdoms officially on their anniversary, in the east and also in Africa at a considerably earlier period than was the case in Rome; here it became an established custom only shortly before the middle of the third century.

The rites and customs in connection with the dead were also the sphere where—as far as we are able to see—the Church first began seriously to practise fine art. The decorated graves which have survived provide us with the earliest and, for a long

¹ *Mart. Pol.* 17 f.

² H. Achelis, *Die Martyrologien*, pp. 17 f. Texts in Lietzmann *Die drei ältesten Martyrologien* (*Kl. Texte* 2)

time, also the most important examples of Christian art: these are indeed only rare for the second century, but during the third century they gradually increase, and do so very differently in different places. Taken on the whole, the Christians appear always to have adopted the customs of the country, wherever these did not clash with their own views. That fact can be easily proved in the later centuries, and the deduction is probable on internal evidence, for the earlier centuries. On the other hand, Christians unanimously repudiated cremation, which was customary in the time of the early Empire in Rome, and soon afterwards in the rest of the occident.

The inference is that, in Rome, the Christians followed the custom of the Jews who lived there, and prepared sepulchral chambers underground, with square-cornered recesses (*loculi*) in the walls as burial places. Also, in accordance with Jewish custom, the corpses were laid here wound in wrappings, without coffin, and the openings were closed with tiles of brick or marble.¹ Shortly afterwards, several of such chambers were united by connecting them with a vertical gallery, whose walls were provided with *loculi* in rows one above another. These passages multiplied and were inter-connected at different points. Thus from what was a small place in the beginning, there developed an ever-growing system of criss-crossing galleries and chambers, which sometimes lay in several stories one above another, and in this manner could be extended in all three dimensions. The chambers were the privileged places. Here the members of eminent families found their common resting-place; here were laid the dignitaries of the church, and soon also the martyrs. For such persons, the form of grave that was preferred was known as the *arcosolium*: in a semi-circular recess hollowed out in the wall, a space shaped like a coffin was chiselled out to receive the corpse, and was then closed from above by a horizontal slab.

Every visitor to the Roman catacombs is acquainted with these graves, galleries, and chambers; they are to be found, with many variations of form, wherever there are underground cemeteries of that kind, and this was the case in almost every

¹ Hipp., *Church Order*, c. 61, uses the Greek word *Keramos* (Horner, *Statutes of the Apostles*, p. 327, 19)

land of ancient times.¹ The earliest of these places which can be dated have been preserved in Rome. Here we also meet with the oldest examples of the artistic decoration of chambers and separate graves. Since, at the same date, we find, in Rome, the analogous phenomenon of Jewish catacombs, the connection between the modes of burial of the two religious communities becomes obvious; and, on the other hand, the numerous memorials belonging to the ancient worship of the dead show us plainly a dependence on Roman customs in art.

For these reasons, Rome has become the classical locus of Christian archæology, and, on account of its series of memorials, which extend unbroken from one century to the next, it offers an impressive and a self-contained record of the development of Christian art in a manner with which no other place can compete. The pre-eminence of Rome in this respect has necessarily led scholars to universalize the information obtained there, and it is one of the most important, if also most difficult, problems of modern research to discover the independent artistic life of other countries, in particular those of the orient. Memorials providing the relevant evidence are gradually becoming more numerous, either by being excavated, or because MSS. keep coming to the light of day out of the darkness of oblivion.

Nevertheless the circumstances obtaining in Rome may well be typical of the first beginnings of Christian art. They correspond to what Clement of Alexandria gave as a doctrinal opinion, c. A.D. 200, that no Christian ought to use for his signet ring any pagan image of a god, or any symbol of either war or eroticism, but rather, e.g., a dove, a fish, a ship, a lyre, an anchor, or a fisherman, i.e. seals which would permit a Christian interpretation.² Here, as elsewhere, Clement showed that he was not hostile to ancient culture as long as it did not endanger his faith or moral principles. Quite in harmony with this standpoint, and wherever the materials permitted, everywhere in the Roman catacombs, unrestrained use was made of carved decorations, on a ground of white stucco, for ornamenting the bald calcareous tufa. A framework of lines gives the

¹ Lists till A.D. 1900 are given by N. Müller in Hauck, *Realenc.* 3rd edit., 10,804-813. Cabrol-Leclercq, *Dict. d'archéol. chrét.*, 2,2441-47

² Clem., *Paed.*, 3,59,²

impression of an arbour made of reed stems or wooden laths, and flower tendrils, coloured ribbons, and wreaths wind from post to post. In between, marvellous flowers shoot out of fantastic vases, masks grin, ornamental heads laugh, dolphins leap gracefully over a trident, and fluttering butterflies flit from flower to flower.

In the chambers of the Christian catacombs, we are greeted by the whole gladsome world of Hellenistic decorative art, such as we may admire in Pompeii, and such as we may find again in the pagan burial-chambers of the Roman Campagna and Isola Sacra. The only things lacking, quite as Clement wished and as is quite natural, are erotic sketches and pagan images of gods. Scrupulousness in this respect was not excessive: the pretty winged creatures representative of Alexandrian art, known as *Erotes* or *Amoretti*, flit unmolested along with their brethren, the birds and the butterflies, between the coloured tendrils; and even Amor and Psyche¹ are not entirely banished from the world of the catacombs. Clement would have frowned at the sight, but, in general estimation, such figures had long become purely decorative elements: who was there that still knew that these little persons with wings were really figures of departed souls, and were intended to provide the dead with friendly society in the grave?

Amongst the traditional elements of Hellenistic origin, we find, after the second century, the picture of a veiled lady with hands uplifted in prayer, and the figure of a shepherd with a lamb on his shoulders and round the back of his neck. Neither is novel to us, but is to be met in many varieties amongst ancient formal figures; here, on Christian soil, they stand forth markedly from the crowd of decorative motifs: they have a meaning, and are symbols. The person carrying the lamb must have reminded every Christian onlooker of the parable of the "Good Shepherd" who carried back the lost sheep to the fold, and who was no other than Christ Himself.² Moreover, certain later liturgies preserve the conception which led to the painting of this picture in the tombs. In the Latin liturgies,³ we read: "Lord, let these who are asleep, when they are redeemed from

¹ Wilpert, *Malereien d. Katakomben*, plate 52 ² Luke 15: 4-7; John 10: 11-16

³ *The Gelasian Sacramentary*, edited Wilson, pp. 298 f.

death, freed from guilt, reconciled to the Father, and brought home on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, enjoy eternal salvation in the train of the heavenly king and in the company of the saints"; the Greeks¹ still pray, in the course of the office for the dead: "I am the lost sheep: call me back, O Saviour, and save me." Pictures in the catacombs, from the fourth century, confirm this interpretation of the Good Shepherd.² The ladies offering prayer appear continually on the Christian memorials of the second and third centuries until, just as in the case of the Shepherd carrying the lamb, they appear no more after the fourth century. Occasionally, the names of the departed are written near the figures, and the figures themselves are draped round with coloured flowery stems from the Garden of Eden:³ this fact shows that they were understood as a symbolical representation of the blessed, who offered prayer to God in the kingdom of heaven.

We find similar figures in the left side-aisle of the enigmatic cult chamber of the Porta Maggiore in Rome. Here, also, it is very possible that the women offering prayer have a symbolical significance, especially as the majority of the other figures suggest an allegorical meaning drawn from Orphic and Pythagorean modes of thought. Is it possible that, in this case also, they are the souls of the departed?⁴ If so, we are face to face, in the earliest period of the Empire, with the forerunners of the Christian figures.

Side by side with these figures, which were borrowed from amongst those usual in ancient times, and which were only Christianized by being given a symbolical meaning, there was to be found, as early as the second century, a number of Biblical scenes borrowed from the Old Testament, all depicting cases of deliverance from death: the sacrifice of Isaac, Noah in the ark, Daniel in the lions' den, the three men in the fiery furnace, Susannah. In addition, there was the story of Jonah in three scenes: thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale, vomited forth on to the land, resting in safety under his

¹ Greek *Euchologion* (Athens, 1899), p. 427 ² Wilpert, *op. cit.*, 190. 222. 236

³ *Ibid.* 110 ff. C. M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch d. altchr. Epigraphik*, pp. 19. 34. 54. 55.

73. 74. 82

⁴ Bendinelli, *Il Monumento sotterraneo di Porto Maggiore* (*Monumenti Antichi*, 31, 1927), p. 747

shelter. In this case also, the liturgies, of both the west and the east, give hints as to the meaning of the pictures. Even to-day, a Roman Catholic priest, attending at the bed of the dying, prays that, amongst other things, God will deliver his soul as he delivered Noah from the deluge, Isaac from sacrifice, Daniel out of the lion's den, the three youths from the fiery furnace, and Susannah from false accusation. This prayer can be traced back to its earliest roots, and is paralleled in both Greek and oriental formulas.¹ The choice of examples proves its Jewish origin; moreover, the Mishna actually preserves a prayer of repentance during fasting, of the same type.²

Thus the question arises whether the Christians possibly borrowed, not only these prayers, but also the pictorial representations, from the Jews. The recent and more exact knowledge of the paintings found in the Jewish catacombs in Rome and in the eastern synagogues, but especially the excavation of the synagogue in Dura, the fortress on the Euphrates, have made it plain that the Jews practised the art of painting and sculpture; as a consequence the question that we have just raised is by no means so much of a side issue as it would have seemed a short time ago. We know that, c. A.D. 200, the city of Apamea in Phrygia, influenced by the colony of Jews there, minted coins depicting Noah and the ark, and did so in a manner which shows the closest relation with Christian representations of Noah.³ In a Palestinian synagogue which has been dated in the third century, the Mosaic floor gives the well-known picture of Daniel between the lions.⁴ In Dura at about the same time, we find the sacrifice of Isaac as a wall-painting;⁵ and the same in a Palestinian synagogue.⁶ These facts strengthen the probability of the hypothesis that the Christian representations of the Old Testament cycle of deliverances, together with the prayers in the liturgy for the dead, go back to Jewish exemplars, or rather were taken over

¹ *Rituale romanum: Commendatio animae*; cf. Ps. Cyprian, *oratio II* (3,147 Hartel), also Schermann, *Oriens christianus*, 3,303–323. Baumstark, *ibid.*, *NS*, 4,298–305.

² *Mishna Taanith* 2,4

³ Head, *Historia Numorum*, 2nd edit., 667. Cabrol-Leclercq, *Diction.*, 1,2515

⁴ *Revue biblique N.S.* 16 (1919), 535, and 30 (1921), 442

⁵ *Illustrated London News* 1933, July 23, p. 189, fig. 10

⁶ Sukenik, *The ancient synagogue of Beth Alpha*, plate 19

without significant changes from the synagogue, and were given a Christian interpretation.

A favourite picture in the early period was that of Moses striking water from the rock: this also was based on Jewish exemplars, even if it cannot be said with certainty that it belonged to the cycle of deliverances. It is possible that Christians were reminded by it of the baptismal water which saved the soul, and possibly also the ancient idea was not far away, according to which the water of life welled up in the Garden of Eden: this metaphor is to be found in the Fourth Gospel.¹ The significance of a group composed of Adam and Eve with the tree of life and the serpent is still uncertain; it appeared in the third century, and remained a favourite for a long time: it may have been intended only as a symbol of paradise, and to beckon the departed.

As early as the second century, we find, associated with the subjects drawn from the Old Testament, a number of New Testament pictures similarly employed to symbolize redemption, and, in particular, to call to mind the death-conquering power of the sacraments. In the foreground is the representation of Christ's baptism, since it was the original of Christian baptism. There is also a fisherman drawing a fish on a hook from the water; in special circumstances, e.g. if other symbolical pictures are near, he may be an apostolic "fisher of men"; similarly, following on a passage in Tertullian, the Christians are born as little fishes in the water in accordance with the exemplar of their Master, the "fish" Jesus Christ.² The fish, representing Christ, appears on the wall of one of the earliest Roman vaults in San Callisto, in combination with a little basket full of loaves among which can be seen a glass of red wine: the symbolism of the Lord's Supper is unmistakable.

About the same period also, the Lord's Supper was represented in the form of the feeding of the Five Thousand. This Biblical narrative was regarded as the archetype of the Lord's Supper on account of the interpretation given to it in the Fourth Gospel, and ending in the words:³ "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up

¹ John 4: 14, 7: 38, 19: 34; cf. 1 John 5: 6

² Tert., *de Baptismo*, 1; cf. also *supra*, p. 138

³ John 6: 54

at the last day." As a rule the painters let seven persons represent the Five Thousand, and they paint them lying on a semi-circular cushion round a table on which are to be found the five loaves and the two fishes mentioned in the gospels.¹ In order to assist beholders to understand the picture, they group the twelve baskets filled with fragments at the end of the meal, and paint them all, or suggest their presence near the table. In San Sebastiano on the Via Appia, another and apparently earlier type has survived, even if the picture itself was painted only after A.D. 200. Here a larger number of people are represented at the meal, as is described in the gospel narrative, while Jesus walks with his disciples among the rows, and dispenses the loaves; at the lower edge of the picture we see a servant hurrying forward with the baskets.²

A reference to the sacrament is also to be found in the representations of the woman of Samaria at the well; this was intended to suggest Christ's living water.³ A similar reference was intended in the very frequent pictures of the man sick of the palsy now carrying his bed on his shoulder: this man shows plainly that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins on earth,⁴ especially in the sacrament of baptism. The Feeding of the Five Thousand also contains, in accordance with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the early church, a reference to the resurrection: but the classical promise of resurrection was given, in ancient art, by the scene representing the raising of Lazarus. With a magician's wand in his hand, Jesus stands before a grave which looks like a temple, and in the doors of which Lazarus appears, though still swathed in wrappings.

The pictures that we have discussed so far are all based on the Bible, and were intended to instruct and inspire beholders by their symbolic meaning; and we have grounds for assuming that the same motive operated in the paintings in Hellenistic Judaism. On the other hand, we must be clear that, even at this early date, New Testament scenes were composed such as it is difficult to bring into line with any of the theological trains of thought already mentioned, and which are better understood

¹ Mark 6: 38 and parallels; John 6: 9

² Lietzmann, *Petrus u. Paulus*, 2nd edit., plate 9 and pp. 310 f.

³ John 4: 14; cf. *supra*, pp. 187 f.

⁴ Mark 2: 10 and parallels

as pictures with a purely objective interest. In these cases, the painters only wished to depict some Biblical story, and they left it to the beholder to make his own religious response. That holds good in regard to the miracle of healing the blind man, and of the woman with the issue, both of which were probably suggested by the resurrection of Lazarus. In this way, they opened up a cycle of healing miracles, and this cycle was much favoured in the following centuries.

Along a very different line, we find the favourite group of the magi from the east doing homage to the Holy Child and His mother. This is the earliest representation of the Madonna; there were variations, it is true, in the immediately following period, but no important further developments. It is only worth remarking that there is another type of Madonna¹ where the prophet Balaam² is painted standing before the mother, who holds the Divine Child on her lap. The prophet predicts the "star which shall arise from Jacob"—his hand points to a star shining on Mary's head. As far as is known this *motif* disappeared, and was only taken up again at a considerably later date. In this period, there is only an isolated trace of the Passion. A picture, in the Prætextat catacomb,³ perhaps shows Jesus crowned with thorns, and being struck by two soldiers with reeds.

Taken on the whole, this exhausts the Biblical scenes made use of by Christian artists during the second and at the beginning of the third centuries. Quite clearly, the first principle in choosing the subjects was that they should be of a symbolic and didactic character; but it is equally clear that an effort was made to break the theological fetters, and to make free use of any material that lent itself to artistic representation. The painters tried to depict a Biblical story for its own sake. This characteristic extended further, and gave rise in the next century to series of pictures. Symbolism, however, was not set aside, but only took on other forms, since it is simply inseparable from religious art of every kind. We have seen that symbolism pertained to Jewish art. To our surprise, the basilica of the Porta Maggiore in Rome⁴ shows to what an immense extent

¹ Wilpert, *op. cit.*, plate 22

² Num. 24: 17

³ Wilpert, *op. cit.*, plate 18

⁴ G. Bendinelli, *Il Monumento sotterraneo . . .* (*in Monumenti Antichi*, vol. 31, 1927)

allegorical interpretation of Greek myths inspired the entirely ancient forms of decoration in this place of worship. We do not yet know to which sect of persons affecting a philosophy of religion the men belonged who built this beautiful place in the first decades of our era: it is not enough to refer to Orphism and Pythagoreanism. It is generally recognized, however, that in order to understand the figures we must take account of allegory and symbolical interpretation.

The same holds good in regard to the vault of the Aureliani, on the Viale Manzoni, dating soon after A.D. 200.¹ It is the burial place of a gnostic sect, and is decorated artistically; its walls depict all sorts of enigmatic scenes of its cult and doctrine; but we also find here Adam and Eve with the serpent, the Good Shepherd with the lamb upon his shoulders; and a large picture appears to symbolize the Sermon on the Mount. A bearded man sits on a hill reading aloud from a roll, while sheep graze on the hillside around and below him; a similar person of the shepherd type is to be found at a later date amongst pictures in churches. In this case, therefore, we have a monument inspired by two religions; the same use of ornamental art, approximately the same subjects, and an analogous significance. All this teaches us that the members of the early Church took pleasure in art, in the first instance as a decoration that made few pretensions. Later on, they came to practise it in earnest, and used it in accordance with the atmosphere of the time to express their religious feelings. In this way, Christians discovered in art a new and powerful means of teaching the people; in a critical age, art was presented with a new content, and this gradually developed, and continues to breathe an inexhaustible life to the present day.

¹ G. Bendinelli, *Il Monumento sepolcrale degli Aureli*, 1923 (in *Monumenti Antichi*, vol. 28, 1922); cf. p. 30 fig. 12, pp. 51-56 figs. 20. 21. 22, plate 9

Chapter Six

CHRISTIANITY FACE TO FACE WITH THE WORLD

THE SANDS OF EGYPT HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED MUCH NEW and instructive material for the benefit of science, and it is to be hoped that some day a few private letters may be discovered in which men from various classes of society have described to their relatives the reasons which moved them to join the Christian Church. These documents would afford us reliable means of testing what attraction Christianity exercised on the men of the second and third centuries.¹ During the whole of this early period, the Church spread without exercising any outer pressure, or any mass suggestion, but simply by a total of purely individual conversions, and these must have taken place by no means all from the same motives. We have a few bare pieces of information about such converts belonging to the educated classes,² but what is entirely lacking, and what is indeed the most important factor, is knowledge of the reactions of the lower classes who went over to the new religion, and enormously increased the number of its adherents. Thus we have no other recourse than to begin with our general knowledge of the spiritual environment, and to dissect out those traits in Christianity which might have exercised a special attraction.

The new faith had separated from Judaism: for a long time now the synagogues had not served its missionaries as the starting points of their propaganda, and the Jews diligently endeavoured to make plain to all the world the distinction between themselves and the Christians.³ This very separation, however, in all probability exercised an attraction which recruited pagans. Much that had made Judaism very attractive, had been adopted by the Christians: e.g. monotheism, pure ethical doctrine, very ancient sacred writings; the objectionable peculiarities as found in the food taboos and rules for ceremonial

¹ The problem is excellently discussed by A. D. Nock in *Conversion* (Oxford, 1933), especially pp. 187–271.

² Cf. Nock, *op. cit.*, pp. 254 ff.

³ *Mart. Pol.* 2,2. 13,1. 17,2. 18,1. *Mart. Pionii* 3,6. 4,8

purity, in Sabbath observance, and circumcision had been abandoned. The Christians were able to set their religion forth even more legitimately as the purest and most trustworthy revelation of a reasonable knowledge of God and the world; this, indeed, was what the "Apologists" diligently sought to do. The educated were attracted. Very much more was done, however, than this. The writings of the prophets were proved to have been fulfilled in the life of Jesus, and the facts of the gospel message were shown to the pagans as necessary events willed by God. In this way, an element of the esoteric and supernatural was introduced into Christian preaching in a manner which could be comprehended by the understanding, and it considerably strengthened the convincing power of the message. What was reported of the miracles of Jesus made Him appear to pagan hearers as one of those celebrated great men of whom Apollonius of Tyana may be regarded as typical. Jesus' divine sonship was as easily a matter of course to men who had grown up in the ancient world of ideas as His ascent to heaven and His elevation to the right hand of the Father. This would appear to them as a heroization, and be understood similarly to Hercules, as a case of admission into the circle of divine beings.¹ His shameful death by crucifixion was more difficult to grasp and was, as it continues to be, an objection: but even in this case understanding came about in the period when many philosophers paid with their lives the price of giving free expression to their convictions. The brave martyrdoms amongst the Christians showed that the spirit continued to dwell in Christ's disciples, and showed it, indeed, to a world which had become accustomed to admire those strong-minded persons who despised death.²

Even a man like the Emperor Marcus Aurelius could only avoid the impression made by the death of Christian martyrs by refusing to regard it as a parallel case, and by setting it down as the result of a mere spirit of opposition and a theatrical gesture.³ However, that was not the opinion of the people, and they were impressively affected by this kind of death. Lucian employed similar tactics and poured scorn on Peregrinus the

¹ Cf. Celsus in Origen, *c. Celsum*, 3,42

² Nock, *ibid.*, pp. 193-197

³ *Marcus Aurel.* 11,3,2

Cynic preacher. When the object of his contempt mounted the funeral pyre in the sight of the Greeks, who had streamed together for the Olympic games, and let himself be burnt in order to give them an example of the way in which a philosopher despised life, Lucian saw nothing in it except mere folly and play-acting. Nevertheless, in the same writing he records an episode from the life of Peregrinus which deserves our most serious attention. This restless man had, at one time, joined the Christians: and Lucian now goes on in this connection to characterize the Christians in a very significant manner.¹ To him they were a hopeless society of people who imagined themselves to be immortal and to possess eternal life;² for this reason they even despised death, and frequently accepted it voluntarily. Moreover, they worshipped that crucified Sophist, and lived after his laws which they accepted "without cogent proof". These laws influenced them to set little value upon any earthly goods, and they held their possessions in common—for this reason a man of business instincts could quickly become rich among them. Lucian takes a delight in telling how Peregrinus was honoured, given gifts, looked after while he was a martyr in prison, and, indeed, supported by members of other churches, and, "out of a thirst for notoriety", was really prepared to die. The wily governor, however, set the fool free, and he continued to play his part among the Christians until he was caught in the act of eating forbidden food: then he was cast out from among them.³

Even from a one-sided picture like this it is clear what features among the Christians struck the surrounding world: they died in their faith and for their faith,⁴ they really did live in accordance with the commandments of their Lord in a comprehensive spirit of brotherly love, and they excluded sinners from their fellowship. They hoped for immortality and eternal life, and the founder of their religion was a philosophical teacher who died on the cross, but who was worshipped by them as a god. From these few hints, it is possible for us to perceive what was the attraction that Christianity must have had for the people of that time. Here was religious faith strong enough to

¹ Lucian, *de morte Peregrini*, 13

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 55

² Cf. also *Mart. Justini* 5,1,3

⁴ So also Celsus in Origen 2,45. 1,2. 8,54

overcome death and to transform life; it was combined with an esoteric age-old wisdom and an enduring miraculous power. The moral earnestness, which agreed with the requirements of the philosophy, became a tangible fact in a thousand different ways. A brotherly spirit, which recognized no social limitations, welded the members of the separate churches together, and softened poverty and illness; it also threw a net over the whole world, and thus united cities and lands into a mighty, organized, spiritual fellowship offering mutual aid in all the necessities of the present life.¹

It was not difficult to find entry into this fellowship, although it is certain that no public means of proselytization was adopted: this last was due to personal contact with Christians met in the course of daily life, who gave promising accounts of their inner and outer experiences. This aroused curiosity and awakened desire for closer acquaintance with the strange religion. A visit to a service of worship, at least as regards its first part, was not impossible for a stranger who was well introduced.² If he were converted, he reported himself to the "teachers" of the church as a catechumen. Then there came a serious testing; he had to declare what moved him to make the change and become a Christian, and his Christian friends had to give a sort of guarantee for him. Then his outer relationships in life were tested, and the first requirement laid upon him was that he should avoid every form of non-conjugal intercourse. If he were the slave of a Christian master, he must be recommended by that master as worthy of reception; if he served a pagan, faithful labour became a duty for him for the sake of the good reputation of the Christians.

A number of callings were not reconcilable with Christianity, and had to be given up when application was made. Here were included not only the unclean trade of prostitution, but also the disreputable arts of the actor, the gladiator,³ the racing chariot driver, together with everything closely connected with these callings. Naturally the priest of a pagan temple, an astrologer, or other soothsayer, was inadmissible. A sculptor or

¹ Harnack, *Mission*, 4th edit., pp. 170–220

² *Const. Apost.* 8,6,2; cf. *re synagogues* Tert., *apol.*, 18,9

³ Cf. also Tert., *idol.*, 11 (pp. 42,9 ff. Wissowa)

a painter had to undertake not to depict gods, and a schoolmaster was recommended to abandon his calling because he was required to deal with pagan mythology in the course of giving instruction. But it is characteristic of the attitude of the Church towards ancient literature that here she was prepared to exercise¹ mild caution, particularly if an indigent teacher had no other means of gaining an honest livelihood. A soldier had to undertake not to kill and not to swear oaths—a dubious thing from the military point of view; anyone already Christian was altogether forbidden to become a soldier. Quite in the same spirit, a Christian was not permitted to hold any office in the government of the state or of the city, the reason being that the power of the sword, and worship of pagan gods, were inseparable from such an office.² It was certainly not easy to carry out strictly the repudiation of so many and, at times, such very attractive callings, but on the whole these regulations were observed. There was small danger that Christians would subsequently take up the interdicted means of livelihood.

Nevertheless it was very difficult for the Church, as it became more at home in this world, to prevent its members from going to all kinds of public shows, whether of the amusing or the sanguinary sort. And these were not only morally dubious, but they brought members of the audience ever and again into new contacts with pagan life: the attractions of these amusements in ancient times were occasionally stronger than Christian conviction.³ The Church had doubts also about visiting the public baths, but they were places of recreation for all classes of the population, and at the same time the centres of a voluntary, social intercourse. As a consequence, they were as a rule permitted, and only mixed bathing was prohibited—although even this restriction could not be punctiliously carried out.⁴

In other respects, the Christian manner of life was not essentially different outwardly from that of any contemporary with sound moral feelings; the rules for life and behaviour, which Clement of Alexandria prescribed for Christians,

¹ See also Tert., *idol.*, 10 (pp. 39 f. Wissowa) ² Hippol., *Church Order*, c. 40 f.

³ Min. Felix, *Ost.*, 12,5. 37,11 f. Tert., *spectac.*, 26. *Didascalia* 13 p. 127,20 ff. Connolly. Cyprian, *ad Donatum*, 7 f. Clem., *Paed.*, 3,76,3–77,4.

⁴ *Didascalia* 2 p. 14,23 ff. 3 p. 26,7 ff. Connolly. Clem., *Paed.*, 3,31–3. 46–8

c. A.D. 200, correspond largely to what we are accustomed to read in Stoic textbooks on ethics. The Stoics had the same attitude of abnegation towards everything unnatural in bodily hygiene, clothing, and manner of life, refusal of every form of growing luxuriousness, together with the recommendation of a healthy simplicity in all directions. What was characteristically Christian was shown only in details, e.g. in the emphatic refusal to wear garlands,¹ or when it was forbidden to use signet rings with pagan figures, and when men were admonished to avoid barbers' shops and bazaars, and to cease playing dice. Moreover it was forbidden to praise goods fraudulently, or to swear falsely in order to do business.² Indeed swearing pagan oaths was altogether forbidden and, naturally also, cursing.³ Reluctance to express the names of pagan gods might go as far as forbidding the reciting of verses from Homer,⁴ but that seems to have been regarded as a narrowness from which the educated classes of Christians withheld, and, in the case of a man like Clement, the poets and philosophers of old were held in high honour.

Our sources give us everywhere the impression that when the Christians held back from this world, the attitude was essentially inward and nothing particularly striking was to be seen outwardly. An acceptable social event in the form of a festive meal was not denied to a Christian; it linked him with his fellow believers and also with pagan "society", but it was expected that on such occasions he should do honour to the Church by his behaviour.⁵ "We are neither Brahmins nor Indian fakirs, nor do we live remote in the woods", cries Tertullian with rhetorical passion.⁶ "We despise none of God's gifts, but we use them with discretion and understanding. Moreover in living in this world, we make use of your forum, your meat market, your baths, shops and workshops, your inns and weekly markets, and whatever else belongs to your economic life. We go with you by sea, we are soldiers or farmers,

¹ Clem., *Paed.*, 2,70–3. Tert., *corona*, 1. *apol.* 42,6. Min. Felix 12,6. 38,2. *Martyr. Pionii* 18,4.

² Clem., *Paed.*, 3,59,2. 75,1 f. 79,1 f.

³ Tert., *apol.*, 32. *idol.* 11 (p. 41,13 Wissowa). *Didascalia* 21 p. 179,22. 15 p. 144,25 Connolly; cf. Achelis, *Christentum i. d. ersten 3. Jh.* (1912), 2 p. 426

⁴ *Didascalia* 21 pp. 179,7 ff. Connolly

⁵ Clem., *Paed.*, 2,4,4. 10,1. 11,1

⁶ Tert., *apol.*, 42

we exchange goods with you, and whatever we make as a work of art or for use serves your purposes. But we do not join in your festivals to the gods, we do not press wreaths upon our heads, we do not go to plays, and we buy no incense from you. It is true that your temple dues are continually becoming smaller: we prefer to give to the poor in the streets rather than to the treasuries of the gods. Other dues, however, are conscientiously met by Christians, and, if in the above case there is a decrease, it is made up for abundantly to the state when the state takes into account on the opposite side your fraudulent declarations and dishonest shifts.” This passage gives a clear description and a substantially correct account of the actual attitude taken up by Christians to civic life. It is by no means an idealized picture.

Disturbances of this peaceful relation with the surrounding world may have taken place occasionally in the narrower circle of the family, if the new faith had been accepted by only some of its members: suggestions of the kind are to be found at least in connection with general warnings against mixed marriages.¹ Such cases of incompatibility would of course occur just the same if one of the couple joined the cult of Isis or some other god of the mysteries; and the Roman world was used to tolerance. There were cases where a Christian soldier came into conflict with his duties: occasioned by some such circumstance, Tertullian published an apologetic writing;² but the problem only became urgent in the time of Diocletian. Isolated matters of this kind were not the roots out of which grew the opposition to “this world”, but rather vice versa: the individual cases were the consequence of the total attitude of Christians towards the Imperium Romanum,³ and the crucial battle-ground was religion. We have already seen that emperor worship constituted an ideological bond of unity;⁴ it made the vast multiplicity of peoples conscious that they belonged to one another; anyone who denied emperor worship placed himself outside the pale of society in the civilized world. Jews alone had gained the privilege of tolerance for their special national religion—and they had to defend the privilege

¹ Tert., *uxor.*, 2,4; cf. *apol.*, 3,4

³ *Supra*, pp. 51 f.

² Tert., *de corona militis*

⁴ Vol. I, p. 167

repeatedly by bloody sufferings. The privilege was refused, and it was unavoidable that it should continue to be refused, to the Christians, for they had cast off all national bonds. The antithesis between the world and the Christian community came to a head on this issue.

The Jews were hated because they withheld themselves, and because they emphasized their peculiar characteristics, but the Christians were hated still more; and at an early date they were supposed to hide evil practices behind their exclusiveness. At first they seemed to be a Jewish sect, and thus they shared with Jews the accusation of atheism. Soon even the fables told about the Jews were transferred to them. It was said that they worshipped an ass's head or something similar,¹ and that they murdered little children ritually in order to eat their flesh.² Indeed at a very early date there was a widespread conviction that, in their "love feasts", reserved to themselves, the Christians ate children's flesh and practised incest. If anyone with evil imagination heard that at the Lord's Supper the Christians partook of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man,³ and that Christian "brothers" married their Christian "sisters", such a person might come finally to the above conclusions: the educated public gave the names "Thyestic meals" and "Oedipodean love" to the crimes which they inferred Christians committed.⁴ Those who did not join in this nonsense were nevertheless convinced that Christians were enemies of the human race, maintained a dangerous superstition,⁵ and nursed contempt of law and custom in secret associations.⁶ It can occasion no surprise that from time to time they became the object of an excitement which had been whipped up amongst the people, especially if the Jews cunningly pointed the way for the raging mobs to take;⁷ or if, under torture, confessions were made which seemed to support the dreadful reports.⁸ Even Nero was quick to make use of this attitude in order to shift blame from himself,⁹ and more than a century later we hear the complaint of a Christian¹⁰ that whenever there was

¹ Tert., *apol.*, 16; cf. Vol. I, pp. 84 f.

² *Acta Lugdun.* in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,26

³ John 6: 53

⁴ Athenagoras *Suppl.* 3. *Acta Lugdun.*, *op. cit.*, 5,1,14

⁵ Tacitus, *ann.*, 15,44. Sueton., *Nero*, 16

⁶ Celsus in Origen 1,1

⁷ Mart. *Pol.* 12,2. 13,1. 17,2. 18,1. Tert., *Scorp.*, 10 (pp. 168,12 Wissowa)

⁸ Mart. *Lugdun.* in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,14

⁹ Vol. I, p. 191

¹⁰ Tert., *apol.*, 40,1-2

a public misfortune, flood, or drought, earthquake, pestilence or famine, excited mobs roared out demanding the death of the Christians: away with them to the lions. This general attitude must be taken into account if we are to understand the strange shape in which the unavoidable conflict developed in regard to emperor worship.

Much research has been done in regard to the legal presuppositions that lay at the base of the trials of Christians, but so far without any quite clear result. This disappointment is not by any means surprising, since the younger Pliny was in the same difficulty in the year A.D. 112. At that time he was the imperial governor of the province of Bithynia; he wrote to the Emperor Trajan¹ about his difficulty, and asked for instructions: he had never yet been present at a legal inquiry in the courts against the Christians, and, as a consequence, did not know, in particular, whether the proof of adherence to Christianity was culpable, or whether the inquiry was to be directed towards illegal actions connected with this adherence. Hitherto, on account of his uncertainty, he had waived formal legal process; in the case of persons who had been denounced as Christians, he had confined himself to asking whether they were indeed Christians. When an affirmative answer was given, he had required them to abandon their allegiance, to do honour to the statues of the gods and the Emperor, which were set up in the tribunal, and to curse Christ. Those who had acted accordingly, and who had thereby obviously abandoned their Christian connection, had been set free unpunished; but those who had remained firm in refusal in spite of repeated admonition he had condemned, and had done so from the point of view that, altogether apart from their belief, this obstinacy and unbending perversity ought to be punished in any case. Roman citizens he had handed over to the imperial assize in Rome. Moreover he had sometimes instituted exact hearings about the peculiarities of Christian worship, and had done so indeed with the use of torture, but had found nothing more than a pernicious and immeasurable superstition. As a consequence, he had abandoned further use of this method, and now appealed for a decision on the part of the Emperor. The subject

¹ *Epist. ad Traian.* 96. 97

was important on account of the large number of Christians who were in this very uncertain legal position. The movement had not only laid hold of the towns but had already overflowed into the villages and the countryside; for the present it was still possible to dam it up and bring it to a stand, because it must be said, on the other side, there had also been an unmistakable increase of the worship hitherto usual in the temples, and at the sacrifices.

Trajan answered briefly and clearly that no general regulations could be given, or drawn up in simple form. Christians were not to be officially sought out. But if they had been notified to the authorities, the accused must be punished; yet everyone was to be pardoned who repudiated his Christianity and confirmed his assertion by offering sacrifice to "our gods". Anonymous notifications were to go unheeded, because they furnished highly pernicious precedent, and contradicted the spirit of the times.

This correspondence makes it clear that neither the counsellors of the highest court in Bithynia, nor the officials of the imperial secretariat in Rome,¹ possessed any juristic material which would provide an answer to the legal question proposed by Pliny, and, therefore, that there was no such material. It is also clear that even Trajan had no desire to lay down any theoretic principle, possibly because he feared unforeseen consequences. The veteran officials of the civil service were able to suggest to their chief only the customary administrative practice in accordance with which Pliny had acted; this was what even the Emperor had confirmed, although he explicitly repudiated anonymous informers. It follows that the governors did not concern themselves at all about the faith and conduct of Christians, but required any accused persons to make known the correctness of their attitude to the state by offering sacrifice before the images of the gods and the Emperor. Every inhabitant of the Roman empire had to fulfil this requirement: anyone who refused was punished with death for an offence against the respect due to the majesty of the empire, the emperor, and their guardian deities. Thus the matter remained. All the *Acts of the Martyrs*² portray the same circumstances; they

¹ W. Weber in *Festgabe für Karl Müller*, 1922, pp. 26 ff.

² Texts brought together by O. von Gebhardt, *Acta martyrum selecta*, 1902 and R. Knopf, *Ausgewählte Märtyrerakten*, 3rd edit., 1929

show that the judge instituted no judicial inquiries, and that there were neither accusations put forward nor defences made, on grounds of the general bearing of the law, or of special legal prescriptions. The only thing to be proved was adherence to Christianity, whereupon the defendant was ordered to swear by the genius of the Emperor and to offer sacrifice before the images. Frequently a long discussion then arose, in which the judge attempted to persuade the defendant to offer sacrifice, and pointed out the consequences of refusal. A definite refusal to conform to the requirement was then followed by the death sentence.

The Christian apologists constantly complained that the name of Christ was sufficient to bring about condemnation. They constantly demanded that their manner of life should be inquired into, and they repudiated the popular fables of their crimes. They constantly described the moral purity of the life of the Church, and protested their loyalty to the state and the sincerity of their prayers on behalf of the Emperor and the Empire. All this, however, was useless, and could not be anything else than useless, because the state refused to discuss these very matters. The state had no desire for religious trials with theoretic discussions, but its governors acted on the basis of the powers inherent in their position. They acted by making use of the police force against public offence, which, in each case, they first officially provoked in order to be able to punish it. Moreover, each case of refusing to sacrifice, when proved in this manner, offered further justification of official doubt as to the Christian attitude towards the state. The whole procedure assumed that it required no proof that the Christians were at bottom enemies of the state, and expressions used by contemporaries show that no real doubt existed as to the general correctness of this opinion. The attitude of the governing officials resulted from this view: they did not institute any "trials" but they took action in compliance with administrative orders.

Tertullian sometimes¹ speaks as if laws had been formulated forbidding people to become Christian, and a martyrology from the year A.D. 180² mentions a senatorial decision to this effect.

¹ Tert., *apol.*, 4,3–5. 10–11. 37,2

² *Acta Apollonii* 13. 23

In several of these *Acts of the Martyrs*, the official administering the law expressly quotes an imperial edict which required Christians to offer the sacrifices,¹ and the whole of the persecution under Decius rested upon an edict of that kind. Its wording in regard to the crucial point may be deduced from the numerous surviving *Libelli*.² Those who were accused of Christianity had to make an attestation that "in accordance with the law they had offered smoke and drink sacrifices, and had eaten sacrificial meat in the presence of the appropriate officials". The edicts, of which the earlier *Acts of the Martyrs* speak, must have been expressed in very similar terms. The decision reached by the senate, as already mentioned, may have had its analogy in the numerous laws³ which the state promulgated at a later time, when it had itself become Christian, and in which Manichees, Arians, and other heretics, were forbidden to exercise their worship; here also it is assumed that these sects were known to be hostile to the state, and that the matter needed no further inquiry. The laws were simply instructions to the governors as to the mode in which they should employ the police force against the sects. But the continual repetition of the same prescription, in decrees constantly being issued, shows that the officials responsible for the internal policy adapted the carrying out of these edicts to the temporary circumstances of the time and place, and that they frequently omitted them altogether because serious doubts stood in the way.

Exactly the same case must have held good in regard to the edicts against the Christians in the earlier period. Decrees of that kind were construed as political guiding lines, and their carrying out was left to the discretion of the governors of individual provinces. There was a single main line leading from Trajan's edict to that of Decius, and it extended beyond these two fixed points in both directions. Under Caracalla, i.e. c. A.D. 215, the celebrated jurist, Ulpian, wrote a work on provincial government; he listed the imperial edicts against the Christians, and reduced the penalties imposed to a system.⁴

¹ *Acta Carpi, Papylae, etc.*, 4.45. *Acta Justini* 5,8. *Acta Apollonii* 45. *Acta Pionii* 3,2; cf. *Acta Maximi* 1,8. Melito in Eus., *H.E.* 4,26,5. 10

² Cf. von Gebhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 182 f. ³ e.g. *Cod. Theod.* 16,5,3. 5,11, etc

⁴ Lactantius, *Instit.*, 5,11,19

The Christian Apologists quote verbatim¹ two edicts, one of the emperor Hadrian, and the other of Antoninus Pius; these edicts digress from the main line in so far as they require proof of the separate crimes of the Christians, or else indeed offer protection to the Christians, but this contradicts the consistent attitude of the state as testified by all the other witnesses. Hence it follows that these edicts have been simply invented, or else the texts have since been "corrected" with a special purpose.

Formerly, scholars used to distinguish the attitude of the different emperors towards Christianity,² and to bring out into relief a number of separate persecutions of Christians; indeed scholars used to follow the example of Eusebius and characterize them by means of ordinal numbers. The presuppositions for such a point of view cannot be maintained. Apart from the special circumstances which held good in the city of Rome itself, the personal inclination of the respective rulers had hardly any influence upon the course of events: the most that happened was that the Emperor, moved by general political considerations or in response to an inquiry on the part of a governor, issued a decree in regard to the Christians. The "persecutions of Christians" were always of limited extent, and their outbreak was dependent on local conditions and the character of the governor. Domitian caused his cousin Flavius Clemens to be put to death, and banished his consort Flavia Domitilla to an island, "on account of atheism"—and it is highly probable that Christianity was meant.³ Perhaps also Acilius Glabrio, who was executed on account of revolutionary intrigues, paid the price of his Christian faith: at any rate it can be proved that his family was Christian as early as the second century.⁴ That Domitian took measures against the Christians also in other respects is told us by writers only in the most general terms.⁵ It is true that about this time *i* Clement speaks of an imminent persecution, and the Revelation of John, which is contemporaneous, declares that Rome is drunk with the blood of the

¹ In Eus., *H.E.*, 4,9 and 13

² Series of texts Preuschen, *Analecta*, 2nd edit., 1909–10

³ Dio Cassius, *epit.*, 67,14. *Prosopogr. imp. Rom.* 2 p. 66 no. 170, p. 81 no. 279

⁴ Suetonius, *Domitian*, 10; cf. Leclercq, *Dict.*, 6,1259–1274

⁵ Eus., *H.E.*, 3,17. Jerome, *Chron. Olymp.*, 218,2–4 and footnote p. 569 together with Dio Cass., *epit.*, 67,14

saints and martyrs of Jesus; the seer saw under the altar the souls of the witnesses who had been slain.¹ While Trajan was emperor, Ignatius was sent from Antioch to Rome, and there put to death.² We are without more exact knowledge of any of these early martyrdoms. A great persecution took place during which, on February 22, A.D. 156, Polycarp bishop of Smyrna was burnt alive at eighty years of age; the Church sent a detailed account of the event to Philomelion in the interior of Asia Minor, and at the same time sent round the news in an open letter. Thereby the attention of Christian people generally was drawn to such documents, and they became eager to receive them: indeed Polycarp was a man whose name was closely connected with the tradition of the highly esteemed letters of Ignatius.³

In the year A.D. 177 a similar persecution broke out in Lyons and Vienne owing to popular passion, and these churches also wrote a letter about it to Asia Minor.⁴ The vivid descriptions in this letter arouse the deepest emotions in every new generation of readers. In this case, the Christians were genuinely hunted out: we can see the alarmed confusion in the churches; the first instances of torture spread terror abroad, a few recanted, the majority kept themselves timidly in the background, pagan slaves said what was required of them. Then the passion of the populace broke loose, the prison was filled with those who confessed themselves Christians, and all the torments of a brutal, murderous blood-lust broke upon the heads of the unfortunates. Then those who had at first recanted were once more arrested, and gained new courage when brought face to face with death. Pictures painted in blood glower dreadfully before our eyes. Bishop Potheinos at ninety years of age lay in prison, beaten by the fists and trampled by the feet of the mob, until death mercifully released him after two days. The slave girl, Blandina, hung on a cross, her body mangled and her bones broken, as food for wild beasts: to no purpose, for the beasts did not touch her, and so she ended her life on the funeral pyre. In the middle of the arena stood a chair glowing red hot holding the Christians in its Moloch-like arms: the

¹ *I Clem.* 7: 1. *Rev.* 7: 6, 6: 9; cf. 2: 13, 12: 11, 20: 4

² Jerome, *op. cit.*, 221, 4

³ Vol. I, p. 236

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 5, 1, 3-3, 3.

smoke of the burning bodies rose to the sky, and unceasingly from all the places where the martyrs stood, the death cry sounded: I am a Christian, I am a Christian. In the prison, they lay in rows fixed helplessly in stocks, and died a silent death: their bodies provided useful food for the dogs. The executioner piled the pitiable remains into a heap, crowned by the heads of the decapitated Roman citizens: finally, the flames flared up and reduced everything to ashes, and these were thrown into the Rhone with scoffing laughter in order that the Christian hope of resurrection, too, might be destroyed.

In all these bloody terrors, however, the reflection of another world gleamed with light. Heaven opened for the Christians in their agony, Christ descended from His throne at the right hand of God where Stephen had seen Him at the moment of his own death, and spoke encouragement to them; all earthly torments paled before the blessedness of the vision of God. No more pain touched the souls of the blessed: their enraptured faces reflected the glory of the Lord as they left their human condition behind, and became like the angels.¹ Hitherto they had bravely confessed their faith, but their entry into the other world conferred on them the dignity of "martyrs", "witnesses of God", who had warranted the truth of their testimony with their lives—just as had been done by Christ, the "genuine and true witness", and their example.² The Church of the earliest period insisted on reserving the title of martyr entirely for those who had suffered death for Christ: only by suffering thus was their witness made perfect. It was a common view in the ancient world, and one found also in late Judaism, that a genuine prophet sealed the truth of his testimony with death,³ but also that, when he suffered death in this way, he was endowed with supramundane powers which vanquished the martyr's pain.⁴ Hence we can understand the view of the early Christians that, only by carrying it through to the death, was their testimony made perfect and complete. Moreover from this standpoint, the death of Jesus gained a new meaning, and

¹ K. Holl., *op. cit.*, 2,72 f. *Mart. Pol.* 2,2–4. Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,51. 55. *Acta Carpi* 39 and oft

² Rev. 1: 5, 3: 14. Eus., *H.E.*, 5,2,2 f. *Mart. Pol.* 1,2. 17,3. Ign., *ad Rom.*, 6,3

³ Cf. Rev. 14: 7; Matt. 23: 30, 35, 37; 4 Macc. 7: 15

⁴ *Ascensio Isaiae* 5,7. 14. 4 Macc. 6: 5–7, 13 f. 9: 21–22

thus the divine revelation made by Him to mankind was confirmed by an ever-increasing number of "witnesses" who, while still on earth, had passed at the moment of death from faith to sight.¹

A very characteristic piece of writing has survived from Africa, which gives an impressive and graphic sketch of these early martyrdoms, and their character of "enthusiasm" in the full sense of the word. In the year A.D. 202, a young woman of the higher classes, Vibia Perpetua by name, together with several slaves, was thrown into prison on account of her Christian faith. She described her experiences and impressions, and Saturus, her companion in suffering, did the same. The Church added a detailed narrative to these pages, and gave an account of the further course of events. It set forth the whole in a form which could be read aloud in church as a genuine witness to the power of the Holy Spirit. That spirit was also revealed in prophecies, visions, and miracles.² As a matter of fact the *Acts of the Martyrs in Africa* were read aloud in the churches for several centuries, and were imitated by the composition of other *Acts*. In these writings, it is plain that the martyrs were conscious of being under the influence of a special act of God's grace from the moment when they were flung into prison; they yearned for visionary revelations, and received what they desired. They had power to redeem the dead by their prayers; in visions seen in dreams, their sight penetrated heaven, and they conversed with the Lord. No wonder that they acted as authoritative mediators, and showed the bishop of their church and his learned presbyter the way towards reconciliation. Pneumatic prophets, subject to no rules, had been found in early Christianity, but had come to rank second to the regulated office of bishop in the course of the second century, and were on the point of disappearing—their place was now taken, however, by the confessors as heroes chosen by the Spirit. These exercised extraordinary authority, occasionally making not inconsiderable difficulties for the normal leaders of a church. In particular they arrogated to themselves³ the pardoning of fallen brothers,

¹ Pauly-Wissowa 14,2044–2052

² *Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis*: sketches of Perpetua, chapters 3–10, Saturus, chapters 11–13

³ Cf. Eus., *H.E.*, 5,2,5

a feature which led, as we shall see later on, to conflicts of considerable importance within the Church.

About the same time as that in which the epistolary accounts of the martyrdoms came to be given, a second type of *Acts of Martyrs* was already being written, a type which became normative in subsequent history, viz. the record of the judiciary proceedings. The account is extant of the trial of Justin in Rome (c. A.D. 165); about the same time, the martyrdom of Karpos and Papylas was described in Pergamon, and in the year A.D. 180, in Africa, there is the lapidary text of the martyrs of Scilli. These records are not copies of official proceedings which the church may have obtained privately in some way, but original literary compositions based on the personal recollections of those who had seen and heard what had taken place, possibly supported also by a few notes. The purpose of these writings was to give the reader a description of the trial in a kind of official record in order to increase the impression of trustworthiness by means of the documentary form. Philosophers, in the other camp, had proceeded in a similar fashion when describing the courage of their comrades before the judgment seat of tyrannical emperors. They, too, cast their reports into an official form, which, at bottom, depended upon notes of the speeches, notes which enabled the proceedings to be written up in good literary fashion; in particular, the speeches of the accused were turned into effective apologies of the good cause.¹ The authors of the records of Christian martyrs followed this example, and in their case, too, the speeches of those who were to testify with their blood, provided the most fertile field for the activity of their rhetoric. To an increasing degree the records contained theological statements; these showed the influence of a learned apologetic, which grew to the point of offering detailed and penetrating proofs of the vanity of idol worship, and even issued in a hope for the conversion of the officiating judge.² Only for a short time were the requirements of readers who sought edification satisfied with the simple type of the earlier period, as in the *Acts of Justin* and of the *Scillitans*: the various redactions of the *Acts of the Scillitans*³

¹ Lietzmann, *Griech. Papyri*, 2nd edit. (*Kl. Texte* 14), nos. 20, 21

² e.g., *Acta Apollonii*, 14–45. *Acta Pionii* 4. 8. 13 f.

³ J. A. Robinson in *Texts and Studies*, Vol. 1 (1891), pp. 112–121

plainly reveal the way in which the material assumed shape.

Although the literary principles were only adopted by Christians incidentally, yet they continued to operate for about two centuries. The literature which has come down to us, has been preserved on account of so many different accidental conditions, that it is not really possible to say whether the rise and fall of the waves of persecution were connected with changes in the inner, or the outer, policy of the Empire. The only thing that can be asserted is that, in the latter part of the reign of the Antonines and until the time of Septimius Severus, we have an increasing number of items of information about persecutions, i.e. at the time when the economic and military crisis of the imperium was beginning to crystallize out. A legend upon which little confidence can be placed, but telling of Alexander Severus, speaks of various friendly acts towards Christians. We must remember, however, that the oriental syncretism of the Syrian dynasty could not have fostered any marked tendency towards persecuting Christians; the Queen Mother, Julia Mamæa, really ruled both the empire and the weak Alexander, and, during one of the most serious war-periods, she commanded to her court in Antioch the most celebrated Christian scholar, Origen,¹ in order to be able to enjoy spiritual intercourse with him.

When Maximinus, the Thracian soldier, in A.D. 235, was preparing to bring this oriental dynasty to a bloody end, there was no further opportunity for æsthetic and religious sentimentality of that kind. The new emperor ruled with brutal force, and slew everyone suspected of clinging to the earlier ways. These included apparently even Christian clerics. He banished the two Roman bishops, and in Palestine a persecution was explicitly directed against the heads of the Church, a persecution which Origen met with an exhortation to stand firm.² In Cappadocia and Pontus, severe earthquakes laid whole towns in ruins; and in their excitement the masses remembered sayings which had been almost forgotten for a long period, sayings which demanded that the Christian scapegoats should be thrown to the lions: the Cappadocian legate, Licinius

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,21,3 f.

² Eus., *H.E.*, 6,28. Origen, *De Martyr.*, 10, cf. chap. 7. 33, ed. Koetschau

Serenianus, eagerly complied with the demand.¹ During the following years of confusion, a genuine oriental, Philip the Arab (A.D. 244–249), once more mounted the throne. Origen wrote letters to him and his consort, Otacilia Severa, and, according to later Christian tradition, he was a Christian.² That did not make it impossible, however, that in Alexandria, in A.D. 249, Christians should be hunted out; four paid the sacrifice of death, numerous Christians were compelled to flee, and their houses were plundered in the wildest manner.³

All these persecutions were little more than phenomena of purely local significance, exactly the same as in preceding cases. When Decius came to the throne, the outlook was completely transformed. This soldier emperor, of considerable practical genius, recognized the need of the Empire in all its seriousness, and knew that all its resources would require to be organized if catastrophe were to be averted: perhaps also he really believed he had discovered a causal connection between the decline of the imperium and lack of due reverence to the gods. Hence, as early as the end of A.D. 249, he gave orders that, everywhere throughout the Empire, all the inhabitants should come before special officers concerned with the sacrifices, and formally declare their firm allegiance to the gods, and prove it by an act of sacrifice.⁴

It is obvious that this regulation really had a negative purpose, viz. to ascertain who were the intractable Christians in the entire empire, and to render them harmless; it was also hoped that the greater majority would be induced by threats to return to the state religion. Numerous documents have been preserved in Egypt in the form of a notice (*libellus*) issued by the local officers of sacrifice. The notices are written on papyrus and deal with the religious inquisition; they say that the owner of the paper had duly performed the sacrifice. These documents, which include one belonging to a pagan priestess, make it safe to assume what had already been extremely probable, viz.

¹ Firmilian of Cæsarea in Cyprian *Ep.* 75,10. Origen in *Mt. Comm. ser.* 39 p 75,7 Klostermann

² Eus., *H.E.*, 6,34. 36,3; cf. J. Chrys., *de St. Babyla*, 6 (2,544 f. Montf.). Jerome, *Chron. Olymp.*, 256,1

³ Dionys. Al. in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,41,1–9

⁴ Wittig in Pauly-W. 15,1279–1284. Leclercq, *Dict. d'arch.*, 4,309–339

that really all the inhabitants, and not simply those accused of Christianity, had to appear before the governors.¹ It was an extraordinary form of worshipping the gods, viz. a formal act of petition on the part of the whole people for the safety of the emperor and Empire which was seriously threatened, but at the same time it had a cruel practical side in a bloody action on the part of the police. The change of the times can be seen even more clearly, if Augustus's² attempts at the restoration of religion are called in as parallels. The Emperor Decius everywhere followed the lines advocated by the adversaries of Christianity.

It follows that the persecution under Decius in fact comprised the entire Empire, and its purpose was to reconvert the Christians to the state cult, thereby destroying the dangerous religion from within: that the stubborn should be wiped out by force was only a secondary means towards this end. This fact was in agreement also with the cautious grading of the rules for the exercise of force, a policy intended to weaken and wear down the hostile attitude, and prescribe death only as an extreme penalty in special cases. Even so, the effect of this terrible attack was extremely serious.

It was quite in accordance with the policy of the state that the first of all to be seized were the higher clergy, in order to render the Church leaderless: but the objective was only partly attained. Fabian, bishop of Rome, was the first to die a martyr's death; this was on January 20, A.D. 250; on January 24 he was followed by Babylas, bishop of Antioch, and also Alexander, the aged bishop of Jerusalem, died in prison in Cæsarea.³ On the other hand, Dionysios of Alexandria was rescued by his faithful supporters from the clutches of the police, and kept safe in a secret place in Libya;⁴ Cyprian of Carthage was also successful in hiding himself: from his place of refuge, he entered into correspondence⁵ with his church, and gave rules of conduct to the clergy. We also possess evidence that Gregory, bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus, took flight successfully.⁶ In all the churches which had been rendered

¹ Wilcken, *Chrestomathie*, no. 125 Pauly-W. 15, 1280 f.

² Vol. I, p. 155

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 39, 1-4. Lietzmann, *Martyrol.*, p. 3. 8, 29

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 40. 7, 11, 22 f.

⁵ Cyprian, *epist.*, 5-7. 10-19

⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *vita St. Greg. Thaum.* (*opera* 3, 569 ed. Paris, 1638)

leaderless, clergy remained behind who attended to the cure of souls, a work which was now particularly necessary, and helped to hold the faithful members together.¹

On the whole, it would appear that the force exercised by the state caused multitudes to recant. The long period of peace had produced a sense of security, and a strong inclination towards "this world"; already a conventional Christianity had arisen which could not withstand serious molestation; this point is unanimously emphasized by men belonging to the Church in Africa, Egypt, and Palestine.² In Spain, two bishops fell away, similarly in Africa; Euktemon, bishop of Smyrna, even made the sacrifices with a garland in his hair, and abjured Christianity.³ We do not know how many other heads of churches recanted: no one had any interest in preserving the information. Laymen streamed in multitudes to the places of sacrifice, led by the eminent and the prosperous: they felt they, at least, must save life and property! Others stole out of the town into the country, the mountains, and the waste places, in order to escape being compelled to sacrifice. Of course that implied abandoning house and goods, and not a few died of suffering in the wilderness, or were taken prisoners by bands of robbers, and made into slaves.⁴ A favourite means of escape was bribery, whereby a certificate of sacrifice was obtained without the sacrifice having actually been offered: in this way it was believed one kept one's conscience uncontaminated by the sin of denial. The Church did not recognize this device, however, and dealt with such *libellatichi* as backsliders even if not as serious offenders.⁵ Strong-minded believers were not lacking who withstood all forms of oppression, imprisonment, and torture, and who won the martyr's crown, but it is surprising that scarcely any trustworthy *Acts of the Martyrs* have come down from the persecution under Decius: the *Acts of Pionius* exist in lonely state: no record has been preserved even of the martyrdom of Fabian, bishop of Rome, although such was sent to

¹ Dionys. Al. in Eus., *H.E.*, 7,11,24

² Cyprian, *de lapsis*, 5 f. Dion. Al. in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,41,11–13. Origen, *hom. in Jer.*, 4,3 p. 25 f. Klostermann

³ Cyprian, *epist.*, 59,10,65,1. 67,1. *Mart. Pionii* 15,2. 18,12 f.

⁴ Cyprian, *de lapsis*, 8. 11. 13. Dionys. in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,41,11–13. 42,2–4. Gregory of Nyssa, *op. cit.* (*op. 3,569* also in Preuschen, *Analecta*, 2nd edit., 1,61)

⁵ Cyprian, *epist.*, 55,11. 30,3. *de lapsis* 27

Cyprian.¹ Hence we must be content with imperfect sources of information.

In his letter to Fabius of Antioch, Bishop Dionysios tells the glorious story of numerous Egyptian heroes of the faith.² The *Acts of Pionius* of Smyrna give graphic descriptions, and in so doing link up consciously with the tradition of Polycarp's martyrdom; they also tell of a Marcionite presbyter, Metrodoros, who had been martyred. We have only quite general notices in regard to the persecution in Pontus,³ and from the letters of Cyprian⁴ we can only deduce, in broad outline and with incidental details, what happened in Rome and Carthage. We are frequently told that imprisoned Christians were not killed, but eventually set free, and, in the record of the tortures suffered by the great teacher Origen, Eusebius expressly asserts that care was taken not to kill him.⁵ That agrees with the general policy of this particular persecution whose object was to destroy Christians inwardly and not outwardly.

This serious attack on Christianity lasted for a year, when it became apparent that it could not end victoriously. At the close of March, A.D. 251, Cyprian returned to Carthage from his asylum. About the same time, the unoccupied Roman see was filled by Cornelius, and the emperor, who was at war on the frontier fighting against the Goths, was unable to prevent it.⁶ When he died in an unsuccessful battle at the beginning of July, the persecution ended automatically, and Cyprian spoke of the divine retribution which had re-established assurance as well as peace.⁷ If the temper of the Christians had been as uncompromising as ever, the state would have brought about a considerable reduction in their numbers. But the Church robbed the state even of this advantage when she recognized that the courage to confess in face of the danger of death was a special and therefore highly prized attainment which, for that very reason, could not be reached by everyone. It was decided to take account of the weakness of the flesh,

¹ Cyprian, *epist.*, 9,1

² Preserved in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,41,1-42,6; cf. 7,11,20-5

³ Gregory Nyssa, *vita St. Greg. Thaum.* (*opera* 3,567) ⁴ Cf. Cyprian, *epist.*, 22,40

⁵ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,41,20. Cyprian, *epist.*, 13,4. 6. 14,2. 21,4. 39,1 f. *Acta Achatii* 5,6. Eus., *H.E.*, 6,39,5

⁶ Cyprian, *epist.*, 55,6. 8 f. Harnack, *Chronologie*, 2,351

⁷ Cyprian, *de lapsis*, 1; cf. *ad Demetr.* 17

and to lay open to those who had fallen away the possibility of being again accepted into the fellowship of the Church; it was promised, in doing so, that reasonable regard would be paid to the seriousness of individual cases. As we shall see, though this attitude did not remain unchallenged, it was maintained; and as a consequence, soon after A.D. 251, everything was, on the whole, as it had been previously, except that the Church was immensely strengthened in her self-consciousness by the heroic example of brave martyrdoms, and by the victory which was gained in the end. Attempts at persecution, which frequently flared up again in the immediately following period, effected no change in the situation; they all seemed to be weak imitations of what had happened under Decius. Gallus re-promulgated the edict about sacrifice, and banished a number of clergy including Cornelius bishop of Rome,¹ who died in exile in A.D. 253. Whether the plague which had recently broken out provided the occasion for this inconsequent action is a question that cannot be settled. We are expressly told that Christians were still regarded as responsible for such catastrophes,² an opinion which held good for another century and a half.

The Emperor Valerian was throughout well-disposed to the Christians; he permitted them even at court and in his immediate entourage until the increasing distress of the Empire clouded the clarity of his judgment. When Macrianus,³ his best general, wanted regulations against the Christians whose prayers appeared to hinder the effectiveness of his magical sorceries, the emperor gave way⁴ and, in the summer A.D. 257, published an edict which ordered the Christians, if they preferred not to accept the religion of the state, at least to join in the ceremonies—the way in which the edict is formulated suggests that an agreeable compromise had been intended. The churches were forbidden to assemble, and in particular, they were prohibited from entering the catacombs where refuge had hitherto been found in periods of persecution. Moreover, the clergy were once again expressly described as

¹ Cyprian, *epist.*, 60, 1. 61, 3. Eus., *H.E.*, 7, 1. *Catal. Liberianus Chron. min.* 1, 75

² Cyprian, *ad Demetr.*, 3. *de mortal.* 1. 8. 17

³ *Prosop. imp. Rom.* 2, 95 no. 374. Stein in Pauly-W. 7, 259–262

⁴ Dion. Al. in Eus., *H.E.*, 7, 10, 3 f.

the crucially important persons¹ to whom the authorities should give their attention.

In addition, Dionysios of Alexandria, together with his presbyter and three deacons, was deported to a place in Libya, and on 30 August, A.D. 257, Cyprian was condemned to banishment to Curubis, a small town nearby on the coast. A short time afterwards, however, the authorities became stricter. Dionysios went to a lonely place which, however, lay nearer Alexandria, and, as a consequence, he was able to continue conducting divine services in secret. On the other hand, Cyprian was recalled and beheaded on September 14, A.D. 258. A short time previously, on August 6, Xystus, bishop of Rome, with four deacons, was taken by surprise in a catacomb, and killed. Four days later, Laurentius his archdeacon followed him in death, and every day saw further martyrdoms.² Just lately, the grave has been found of a certain Novatian who was martyred about this time.³ The intensification was the effect of a new edict which prescribed stern measures against clergy and, a very significant clause, against Christian senators, knights, and other eminent persons; persons of the slave class belonging to the imperial household were threatened with compulsory labour.⁴ The persecution brought about a whole series of martyrdoms in Africa, and reliable accounts have survived telling what happened.⁵ Most of these martyrs were clergy of various ranks, but, in isolated cases, laymen were executed. One narrator bewails the fact that the arrested laymen were purposely separated from the clergy, in the hope that they would more easily be made to recant.⁶ We hear from Spain that Fructuosus, bishop of Tarragona, and two deacons were burnt to death;⁷ and Eusebius describes three martyrs in Palestine, as well as a woman who belonged to the Marcionite church.⁸

Meanwhile, in more than one region in the west, rebellions flared up in the army, and, in the east the Persians were

¹ *Acta Cypriani* 1,1. 5-8; cf. *Acta Dionysii* in Eus., *H.E.*, 7,11,7. 10

² Cyprian, *Epist.*, 80,1. *Lib. pontif.* 25 mentions seven deacons

³ *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 10 (1933), 217

⁴ Cyprian, *epist.*, 80,1

⁵ *Acta Montani et Lucii* and *Acta Mariani et Jacobi*

⁶ *Acta Mariani et Jacobi* 10,2 ⁷ *Acta Fructuosi* (Knopf p. 83) ⁸ Eus., *H.E.*, 7,12

threatening: Valerian marched out against them in semi-force, and was taken prisoner in some unexplained manner: after a short time he died in captivity. Macrianus now made an attempt to gain the throne, less for himself than for his sons, and ordered his troops to march from Edessa to Illyria, but there the enterprise collapsed at the end of A.D. 261. This fact is sufficient in itself to explain that Gallienus, Valerian's active and wary son, co-regent, and successor, put an end to that persecution of Christians which Macrianus had brought about. He immediately annulled his father's orders, and published a kind of edict of tolerance¹ in which Christians were again permitted to use their places of worship including their cemeteries, and orders were given that they were "not to be interfered with". This was more than any emperor hitherto had granted, because it included an implied recognition of Christianity as a permitted religious society. The time had passed when an attitude of impartiality could be artificially maintained. The state was now compelled to say a clear Yes or No to Christianity, because it was a force which, in spite of two bloody persecutions, had become stronger than formerly. Gallienus's decision was the equivalent of a whispered Yes, and signified that the Christians had won.

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 7,13

Chapter Seven

THE APOLOGISTS

WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE STATE DID NOT ENTER INTO LEGAL discussions with the Christians, and similarly for a long time there was no literary examination of Christian problems, or learned argument about its doctrines. Public opinion in regard to it remained fixed so unconditionally that no one took the trouble to examine it more closely. Whether mentioned by Tacitus or Suetonius, Pliny or Fronto, Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius, Lucian or Galen the physician¹—this was always done incidentally and in a contemptuous tone which did not alter at all even when they had to acknowledge that Christians faced death with a strange courage. But of course there must have been all sorts of discussions which were not recorded, and, in process of time, a number of anti-Christian conclusions must have found common acceptance.² Moreover, there is no doubt that the persecutions did not take place unaccompanied by fanfares of rhetoric. Granted that the speeches of the martyrs before their judges have mostly been interpolated, and handed down in the *Acts* in a style that has been purposely shaped to suit a special purpose, nevertheless, not infrequently, instead of the bureaucratic formulas, there must have been an actual controversy with passionate accusation and equally firm repudiation in which the vital issues were debated. Occasionally a Cynic philosopher³ made a special point of attacking Christian preaching. Celsus is the first whom we know to have composed a regular polemic against Christians. He may possibly have written in the last years of Marcus Aurelius, but we know nothing more about the circumstances of his life than was familiar to his great opponent Origen, in whose work the polemic has been preserved.⁴ Celsus really took trouble to

¹ Tacitus, *Ann.*, 15,44. Suetonius, *Nero*, 16. Pliny, *epist. ad Trajan.*, 96, 97. Fronto in Minucius Felix, *Ost.*, 9,6. 31,2. Epictetus 4,7,6. Marcus. Aurelius 11,3. Lucian, *de morte Peregrini*, 11–16. *Pseudo-mantis* 25. 38. Galen, *de puls. diff.*, 2,4. 3,3 (8,579. 657 ed. Kühn)

² Geffcken, *Zwei griech. Apologeten*, 240 f.

³ Crescens in Rome, cf. Justin, *Apol. App.*, 3 and Tatian 19

⁴ Restored by R. Bader (Stuttgart, 1940)

understand Christianity; he knew the Bible, and had definite acquaintance with church doctrines, and the arguments employed by Christians; indeed he had already had discussions with educated defenders of Christianity. He shows as clearly as possible the kind of closed minds with which antagonists confronted the Christians.

Even if the fictitious crimes already mentioned be left on one side there still remained plenty, and more than plenty, of points of attack. Sometimes the Christians were regarded as belonging to the same class as the despised Jews, and contempt was expressed about the disputes between these two groups; they were held to have everything in common, especially the ridiculous belief in the Messiah, and they boasted a special relation to God whereas in fact they only seemed to be miserable vermin similar to a multitude of bats, ants, frogs, or worms.¹ The authority they recognized in common was Moses who had really borrowed his knowledge from the earlier sages, and had given his people their faith in their god, together with angel-worship and sorcery.² Jesus followed in his footprints: for He also was a deceptive sorcerer, and His supposed miracles corresponded to the sort of thing that the conjurors still performed in the market place—admittedly, however, the latter did not give themselves out on this account to be sons of God.³ The stories told by Moses, about the primeval period and the patriarchs, were so foolish and scandalous that self-respecting Jews and Christians were ashamed of them and attempted to make them unexceptionable by allegorical explanation—though without success.⁴ It was one and the same god whom the Jews and the Christians worshipped,⁵ but He was subject to human passions, was angry, and issued threats; and, in the end, was not strong enough to assist His son in the hour of suffering, nor to avenge his death.⁶ He could no more protect His chosen people, Israel, from being scattered throughout the world than He could guard Christians everywhere from bloody persecution.⁷

Nevertheless, the Jews might be granted their indigenous,

¹ Celsus in Origen 3,1. 5. 4,2. 22 f. 6,50

² *Ibid.* 1,17–26

³ *Ibid.*, 1,6. 26. 68. 2,7. 32. Justin, *Apol.*, 1,30

⁴ *Ibid.* 4,36–51; cf. 1,18

⁵ *Ibid.* 5,59

⁶ *Ibid.* 4,72. 1,54. 2,34

⁷ *Ibid.* 8,69; cf. 39. Justin, *Apol.*, 5,1. Minuc., *Oct.*, 12,2

ancestral religion: in any case, those proselytes were to be condemned who joined them because they despised their own ways; all this applied particularly to the Christians, who were a split from the Jews, and who now existed in the world without root, and without national tradition. They pursued their crazy illusion of a universal religion which was to unite under one law all the peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa.¹ Their doctrine of the incarnation of God served no purpose; it was inconceivable since it ascribed to the unchangeable Being a transformation into something on a lower plane;² and they told fables about the miraculous birth of Jesus, the Son of God, from a virgin, in order to conceal the fact that an adulteress had been seduced, and had borne him to a soldier named Panthera. Moreover, whatever else was reported about His Baptism, the wise men from the east, the flight to Egypt, and His miracles, all this was just as incredible as His resurrection, which, indeed, took place in suspicious secret.³ His lowly origin and His shameful death, on the other hand, sufficiently proved that He was not a son of God, but a deceiver who paid the due penalty on the cross.⁴

Hence it was not surprising that his adherents wished for no acquaintance with human wisdom, that they regarded it as foolishness in God's sight, and that they always demanded faith alone, and faith on top of faith, as the pre-supposition of salvation. Of course their recruits consisted always of the un-educated and simple. Over and above this whatever they possessed that was good or reasonable they had borrowed from the Greeks, although mostly in a perverse manner.⁵ Their whole mode of life was self-contradictory and foolish; and the best thing that could happen would be for them to draw the last consequences from their attitude, which was hostile to life, and simply disappear from the world without leaving any descendants, in order that such a society might vanish from the face of the earth altogether.⁶

Such was the spiritual background of the persecutions of Christians. That was what the yelling and baying masses felt

¹ *Ibid.* 5,25. 41. 51. 33. 8,72

² *Ibid.* 4,3. 14; cf. 6,69. 72

³ *Ibid.* 1,28. 41. 58. 62. 68. 2,55. 63. 70

⁴ *Ibid.* 1,69. 70, 71. 2,5. 6,74

⁵ *Ibid.* 1,9. 6,11. 12. 15. 16. 19, cf. 2,5

⁶ *Ibid.* 8,55. Justin, *Apol.*, 4,1. Minuc., *Oct.*, 9,1. Tert., *Scapul.*, 5

when aroused to hunt them out, and while they sated their eager eyes in the arena with the blood of the martyrs; that was also the opinion of the educated classes, and of the high officials who pronounced sentence of death upon them from the tribunal. It was a bold and difficult undertaking to struggle against such a confirmed and universal conviction; nevertheless the appeal to public opinion, the conversion of the educated, and, in the last analysis, the conversion of the emperor, were the only means by which one could hope to ameliorate the situation. It was for this reason that, after the first half of the second century, Christian writers set themselves the difficult task. After an otherwise unknown *Quadratus*¹ had sent the Emperor Hadrian a writing in defence of the Christians, apologies were composed ever afresh, and dedicated to the rulers. Whether any of these pamphlets actually reached the imperial chamber at that time, or came to the hands of the ruler, is an open question, and, indeed, scarcely that. It is plain, however, that the attempt was made to spread these works amongst the educated classes, and therefore to distribute them through the usual channels of the book-shops, apparently without success.²

Nevertheless, even if the first purpose was not attained, the whole enterprise was of the greatest significance for the evolution of Christianity. Christianity now issued quite consciously from the narrow limits in which it had been shut away from the world, and spread its treasures out before the eyes of those who represented culture in the Roman empire. Every effort was made to show that the new religion did not stand in insoluble contradiction with the recognized ideals of culture, especially with the best achievements of philosophy, but was in a large measure of agreement; and that it brought to a perfect and vital actuality what was seen to exist there only in an inchoate form and as a theoretical matter. In this way, those tendencies were appropriately valued which, streaming from Pythagorean and Platonic sources, managed to overcome, by mystic speculation, the intellectualism which had hardened into scepticism, tendencies which were struggling towards neoplatonism as the final philosophy of the ancient world. The purpose of the Apologists in writing was to

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 4,3,1 f.

² Tert., *test. anim.*, 1 (p. 135,10 Wissowa)

contribute towards the kind of literature that was recognized in the world of culture. It is not surprising that they were not immediately successful, but they pursued their way undiscouraged and created the conditions within which, scarcely a century later, a man like Origen could act as an apologist and systematizer of Christian thought, stand side by side with Plotinus the neoplatonist, and, in his own person, represent the highest culture of the age. The Apologists took the final and crucial step towards the conquest of the world by Christianity: they won the spirit of Greek science for the message of the Church.

The earliest of the apologies which have survived bears the name of a certain Aristides of Athens, and may date from c. A.D. 140: it is dedicated to the Emperor, Antoninus Pius. It is possible to reproduce it with some difficulty from a Syrian translation, Armenian fragments, and Greek quotations.¹ Here a man of mediocre culture employs a superficial learning in order to prove that the ancient civilized peoples, the Chaldeans, the Greeks, and the Egyptians, had had no genuine knowledge of God; that the Jews corrupted monotheism and sound moral teaching by angel-worship and various rituals; and that the Christians alone possessed the truth and lived according to their commandments. All this is put forward in a clumsy style and with an artless arrangement; it cannot have made much impression upon an educated reader of the time. Nevertheless we ought to consider its contents. Aristides begins by declaring that, after gazing at the miraculous constitution of the world, he had learned to recognize God as the mover of the whole; the negative formulas, which he uses elsewhere about God, were familiar in Stoic lecture rooms, and were also to be found among the philosophical representatives of Judaism.² At this point, he begins to say, paradoxically, that the Christians alone, "the third race" in the world, possess the truth; the other two races, Jews and Gentiles, have gone astray. The Gentiles fail by worshipping the creature instead of the creator, and by their unethical polytheism. In this connection the author is making use of arguments which had already been brought together for the same purpose in Jewish apologetic,

¹ Geffcken, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-27. Goodspeed, *Apologeten*, pp. 3-23

² Geffcken, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-41

and which he obtained partly from the preaching of the Old Testament prophets and partly from the anti-religious speeches of the Sceptics and the Epicureans. But both streams flow in the same direction, and the entire argumentation could have been put forward in almost the same terms as early as Cicero's time. The discussion about the worthlessness of polytheism consists of purely academic declamations lacking contact with contemporaneous living religious feeling, and slaying once more an opponent already long dead. If it was desired to make any fresh impression with this sort of thing it would have to be served up piquantly in Lucian's manner: in itself the subject-matter was boring.

We remark that so far there is no single word of anything characteristically Christian; even Jewish ritualism and angel worship are repudiated without any particular proof. The positive recommendation of Christianity only comes in at the end. Here again there is no discussion, nothing repudiated or proved, but simply something recounted. Christians originate from Jesus Christ: He descended from heaven as the Son of God and became incarnate from a virgin. He chose twelve disciples in order to proclaim His teaching, and, after His death and resurrection, they spread the truth in the entire world, the truth, in particular, that it was right to offer prayer only to the Creator of the world, and to fulfil only the commandments of Christ. He who did so would win eternal life after the resurrection of the dead. What is then given as the essence of the commandments of Christ corresponds to the doctrine of the catechism, which we have already discussed in connection with the *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Epistle to Diognetus*, and other Apologists. The reader is frequently encouraged to draw information for himself from the Holy Scriptures, and he is left with the assurance that the continuance of the world is due only to the prayers of Christians: hence it was hoped that the pagans would be converted immediately, lest the Last Judgment come. In this early example of apologetic, the various elements exist to a certain extent in an immature state: they are set before the reader without being worked over: they are disconnected, and lacking in spiritual penetration. It is not surprising that they are not attractive.

Only a decade later Justin, who came from Palestine, wrote an *Apology* in Rome addressed to Antoninus Pius and his philosopher son, Marcus Aurelius. After another decade, he followed this pamphlet by a religious dialogue with a Jew, Trypho by name, and conceived it on broad lines. Justin was not a stylist nor skilled in arranging his material; nevertheless he wielded a ready pen, and he was as good a philosopher as many of his contemporaries. The fact that he had these qualifications, that he had become a Christian, and found the true philosophy in Christianity, is what gives him his real significance and makes him the classic Apologist. Even in his case, we find the traditional polemic against polytheism and the corresponding mythology, and it is drawn from the familiar sources. All these things, however, are put forward in a new light, because faith, mythology, and worship, as found in paganism, are represented as the fraudulent invention of daemons. Even as early as Paul,¹ daemons were represented as the recipients of pagan sacrifices; similarly Justin, who was influenced by the newly awakening Platonism, accorded ample scope to these beings, who were intermediate between God and the world. As early as Plutarch they had been regarded as intermediaries between gods and men, and it was their voice which was heard in the oracles. According to Justin, they had acted throughout the whole course of history as self-seeking enemies of divine truth, as creators of lies, fraud, and all such illusions as were intended to sate the senses with an alluring legerdemain. God had given predictions through the prophets: by means of strange myths and cults, and by acting in conjunction with human passions, the daemons had cheated them of fulfilment in advance in order to deprive God's genuine revelation of its power of proof. Their false game had now been discovered, and the truth brought clearly to light by the coming of Christ. For over a millennium in advance, all the details had been predicted in regard to the act of salvation, the life, suffering, resurrection, and ascension of Christ up to the destruction of Jerusalem: all of the predictions had been fulfilled promptly to time, and the certainty, that the prophets spoke the truth, left no room for doubt that the remaining prophecies of Christ's second advent

¹ 1 Cor. 10: 20 f.

and the Last Judgment would be fulfilled.¹ Thus Justin worked out an entirely rational argument for the truth of Christianity. Starting from this foundation, this type of argument entered into the teaching of the Church, and into orthodox apologetics, and is still alive at the present day. Moreover, Justin uses the same method in order to give further proofs. It is only the fulfilment of prophecies which guarantees the trustworthiness of what Christ said about Himself when He declared Himself to be the first born Son of God.² What did that mean?

Justin followed up the brief hints contained in the *Apology* with the more exact claims advanced in the *Dialogue*. To him, as to Aristides—and similarly to the other apologists—God was the final cause of the world, a supernatural Being, eternally unchangeable, and only recognizable to the eye of reason.³ No name is truly His name for we are only able to speak in praise of Him on the basis of His works.⁴ No space, not even the entire universe, comprehends Him who existed before the whole world: it is inconceivable that He could ever cross the gulf in order to become visible on earth and speak to man.⁵ He exists beyond all being, as Plato said, and Justin agrees with him and praises philosophy.⁶ The “unnnameable Father and Lord of all” sent forth from Himself “at the beginning”, and before every created thing, a power which we call the “logos”, the “word” of God, because it brought God’s message to man.⁷ At this point, Justin makes use of the ambiguity in the Greek word, because to him “logos” meant both “word” and “reason”. The logos of a man exists in him first of all as “reason” or “thought”, and then proceeds from him as the spoken “word”, without the man himself thereby suffering any loss of his inner logos, i.e. his reason; similarly the logos of God which existed with Him from eternity—i.e. His reason—was not diminished when He sent forth the logos from Himself. Rather, it was as if one fire ignited another without itself thereby becoming smaller. Justin describes this process as the procreation of the Son of God: and since the Son came forth from God the Father as an independent person, we may speak of Him as a “second God”

¹ Justin, *Apol.*, 31–53

² *Ibid.* 53,2

³ Justin, *dial.*, 3,4, 7

⁴ *Apol.* 10,1, 2 app. 6,1, 2

⁵ *Dial.* 127

⁶ *Dial.* 4,1 (cf. Plato, *Republic*, 6 p. 509b). *Apol.* app. 13,2

⁷ *Dial.* 127,2–4, 128,1 f.; cf. 61,1

although God's being is not divided nor are His counsel and will separated from Him.¹

The logos is to be found in the Holy Scriptures as the Son who was begotten before all creation. When creating the world, the Father said to him "let us make man"; He was the divine wisdom which appeared at the beginning of God's ways, as declared in the Proverbs of Solomon 8: 22,² and through him God created and ordained the world;³ in this way He was the mediator between the unapproachableness of the Father and the need felt by the world. He occasionally appeared in visible form to man, and the Old Testament often calls Him "the angel of the Lord", or even "the Lord"; He reveals Himself to men of God in word, fire, signs, and wonders, and few have been accounted worthy to see Him.⁴ He spoke through the prophets, instructing, exhorting, and warning; but also beyond the people of Israel His operation was unmistakable—even the school of the Stoics spoke of a "seed of the logos" scattered among the whole of mankind. Whoever had permitted this seed-corn to germinate in his soul, and had lived according to the directions of the logos, Christians counted as one of themselves: i.e. men like Herakleitos, Socrates, and, in the most recent period, the Stoic Musonios. The world had scoffed at them and at Christians as atheists; and envious daemons had betrayed them to the hatred of the multitude, and pronounced death upon them.⁵

The final revelation, and the one that was decisive, took place when the logos, in all its fullness,⁶ itself came on earth, and became man in the manner proclaimed in advance through the prophets. As a sign that a mighty act of God was taking place here, the logos caused himself to be born in a miraculous fashion from a virgin just as Isaiah (7: 14) had predicted many centuries before—and He guaranteed His mission by healings and raisings of the dead.⁷ Granted that His appearance caused all the daemons to come out in array, and that they strove against Him with all their powers and brought Him to the cross; but He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. The logos had prophesied even that in every detail.⁸

¹ *Dial.* 61,2. 128,4. 56,11

² *Ibid.* 62. 129,3

³ *Apol.* app. 6,3

⁴ *Dial.* 61,1. 128,1 f.

⁵ *Apol.* 46,1–4. app. 8,1–3; cf. 10,4 f.

⁶ *Apol.* app. 8,3. 10,7

⁷ *Dial.* 43,3–8. 66–71. 84,1 f. *apol.* 33,2. 48

⁸ *Apol.* 35–8. 45. *Dial.* 86–91

What was the purpose of the whole movement? God wished to draw mankind to Himself. For their sakes indeed, and for that alone, had He created the world in order that, by a worthy exercise in all the virtues, they might rise to Him and, when set free from suffering and mortality, might partake in His rule.¹ The logos had ceaselessly pointed out this way of approach to God, and finally, by his personal appearance on earth, had laid it most impressively upon human hearts. He became the "new law-giver", although the "new, eternal, and final" law was the old law of rational virtue long recognized by sages,² a law which men must obey in complete freedom of will if they would be saved. The incarnation of the logos had caused the brightest of lights to shine upon the truth that was before their eyes, a proof being the fact that the name of the crucified Jesus Christ even yet scared away all evil spirits:³ he who now closed his eyes and blindly submitted to the fraud exercised by daemons would properly have to bear the consequences in the eternal fire.⁴ Xenophon's fable of Hercules at the parting of the ways held good for the vital decision in regard to Christianity.⁵

Justin's "Christian philosophy" went so far—but no farther. Christianity of this kind was a genuinely philosophical system, constructed of familiar elements. The idea of God was borrowed from popular philosophy and, even in the expressions employed, corresponded with what we can find among the religious-minded Stoics in the first century.⁶ As already said, the doctrine of daemons derives from the newly reawakened Platonism,⁷ and only received from Justin a place in his apologetic argument which corresponded with his purpose: he then used the intermediate beings to explain pagan forms of worship and religion; at the same time and on the basis of Jewish models,⁸ he equated them with the angels and devils of the Bible. Already in John's gospel, Jesus Christ had been described as the logos of God. Whereas, in John, this identification was meant to abrogate the historical limitations of Jesus's life, and to raise it to eternal significance, we find in Justin a tendency almost in

¹ *Apol.* 10,2

² *Dial.* 18,3. 11,2. 43,1. *Apol.* 23,1 f. 14,2. 16,14. *Dial.* 23,1. 30,1. 93,1–3

³ *Dial.* 30,3. 76,6. 85,2 ⁴ *Apol. app.* 7,1–9 ⁵ *Ibid.* 11,3–8 ⁶ Vol. I, pp. 172–76

⁷ Geffcken, *op. cit.*, 219 f.

⁸ Cf. *Handb.* on 1 Cor. 10: 20. Re Philo., see Vol. I, p. 96

the contrary direction. The purpose was to render it impossible to reject the authority of Christ's teaching in this way, but, chiefly, to make it cast light on the examination conducted by reason. Jesus was indeed the incarnate divine reason, and consequently everything truly reasonable on this earth must in the end agree with Christianity. But the concluding proof for the identification of Jesus Christ with the logos was provided in a jejune rationalism based on the fulfilments of prophecies.

The consequence of all this was an impression, which cannot be explained away, that the life and death of Jesus did not follow their course owing to an inner necessity and a deeper meaning, but on account of purely outer reasons, viz. because they had once been prophesied like this; like this, and not otherwise, had they taken place. The "soteriological significance" of the death of Jesus, or the "work of Jesus", is not considered; and "redemption" consists, in practice, in imparting philosophically sound doctrines of God and virtue, which, moreover, each man could accept or reject freely, on his own responsibility. If mankind had seen through the daemons' deception at the right time, and taken more to heart the teachings about the logos preached by the prophets and the sound philosophers, the whole tragedy of Jesus would have been unnecessary. Justin's doctrine of the logos itself has grown out of familiar roots, roots which struck deep in Jewish and Hellenic soil, and which are already inextricably entangled in the earliest extant literature. Justin was influenced by Stoicism, and by Platonizing ways of thought, and, indeed, instructive parallels can be shown to exist in Philo,¹ without our being justified in assuming that Justin had ever had a copy of Philo in his hand. But in whatever ways this doctrine may have penetrated in detail into Justin's working ideas, and however strange it may seem when contrasted with the early Christian ideas, Justin and his fellow-warriors introduced it into speculative theology, where it immediately dominated all thought, and continued to do so triumphantly for many centuries.

We should be altogether in the wrong if, as a consequence of all this, we were to expect that the religious life of the

¹ Vol. I, pp. 93 ff.

Apologists was nothing more than a mere moralism, and that their Christianity embodied a philosophical religion of an emancipated kind such as could be equated with the philosophizing Judaism of the educated proselytes. Justin did not outline a Christian doctrine of ethics as a Stoic would have done and as, for example, Clement of Alexandria actually did, making it a transcription of rational principles; rather he presented it as the sum of Jesus' commandments arranged in systematic order under appropriate titles.¹ Thus he laid special emphasis on words like chastity, charity, benevolence, patience, gentleness, and love of truth. Aristides² started from the Ten Commandments and dealt with the same subject-matters without quoting words of Jesus: care for burying the dead was added by him as a specially important Christian duty. We find essentially the same case among the other Apologists.³ It is the simple tradition of the Church unaffected by any type of theory, such as is familiar to us from the time of the *Didache*, and such as was regarded even by the Apologists as the sum of Christian rules of life. They were quite certain of the soundness of these teachings in a world which had accepted Stoic ethics. Nor did they hesitate on occasion to assert emphatically⁴ that the virtues which were merely inculcated by the philosophers were actually practised by Christians, and indeed by the most unassuming of men.

The observations that we have made in regard to ethics might be repeated in all other spheres. Justin confined himself entirely to the doctrinal tradition of the Church, and made not the least attempt to bring it into organic connection with his "philosophy". After he has given the Rule of Faith, he cites the formula of the Trinity, which by that time was becoming more definitely shaped. And he speaks of faith in God the Creator, in the Son, Jesus Christ, as occupying the second place, and of faith in the "prophetic spirit" as occupying the third place—although, according to his own theory, the Son, as the logos, is identical with the spirit which revealed itself in the prophets. The doctrine of the Trinity was important to him in this

¹ *Apol.* 15–17

² Aristides, *apol.*, 15,4–12

³ Athenagoras, *suppl.*, 32 f. *Resurr. mort.* 23. Theophilus, *ad Autol.*, 3,9–15

⁴ Justin, *apol.*, 16,8. *app.* 10,8. Athenagoras 11. Minuc. Felix, *Oct.*, 38. Orig., *c. Cels.*, 7,44

connection, and he adds belief in the angels in order to prove to pagans how far removed were Christians from the bald monotheism which pagans derided as atheism. Moreover Justin was not the only one to adopt this attitude,¹ and he was quite unmoved by the fact that his doctrine of the Trinity was irreconcilable with his logos theology.

We hear an echo of the theology of the Church when Justin speaks of the "mystery of the cross" through which Christ had won mankind for Himself. That theology is also implied when he speaks of the redemption of the faithful by Christ's blood and death;² similarly when he describes the consecration of the elements of the Lord's Supper by invocation of the logos, or when he speaks of the change which comes upon our flesh and blood when we participate in the consecrated food.³ His eschatology, together with his doctrine of Christ's second advent, keeps quite within the forms of Biblical tradition, and includes both the resurrection of the flesh and the hope of the millennial kingdom in the newly restored Jerusalem.⁴ Justin is also quite content with New Testament forms of expression when he prefers to describe *aphtharsia*, incorruptibility, as the aim of the Christian life.⁵ His disciple Tatian used similar language,⁶ but Theophilus introduced a Hellenistic point of view when he described a Christian's reward in the words that he "receives immortality and *becomes God*".⁷ That was the aim sought also by the Greek mystagogues.⁸

It is obvious that Justin's Christianity is divided into two halves; one is a philosophical religion which clothes Greek ideas and conceptions in a loose Biblical garment, and which in the end issues in man's self-redemption ethically conceived; the second aspect is that of the unreasoned faith of the Church in which words of Jesus, sacramental mysticism, and church-life combine to form an active unity. The moral code based on Judaism, and belonging to the earlier period, was outgrown; gnosticism

¹ Justin, *apol.*, 13,1-4. 6,1 f.; cf. Athenagoras, *op. cit.*, 10. 12. 24. Theophil., *op. cit.*, 2,15

² Justin, *dial.*, 134,5. 111,3

³ Justin, *apol.*, 66,2

⁴ *Apol.* 18-20. 50. 52,3. *dial.* 80,5. 81,4

⁵ Justin, *apol.*, 10,3. 13,2. 19,4. 39,5. 42,4. 52,3. *dial.* 45,4

⁶ Tatian 7,1. 32,1

⁷ Theoph., *op. cit.*, 2,27

⁸ Reitzenstein, *Hellen. Mysterienrel.*, 3rd edit., 49. 257. 290 f.

was a side-track; and even Paul and John were no longer comprehended. Nor, as yet, had Justin grasped the necessity of uniting the two parts.

In the next decades, apologetic literature developed still further. Justin's disciple, Tatian, was a Syrian by birth and he constantly emphasized the contrast between his own race and the Greeks. He hated the Greek language and culture, although he did not despise their rhetorical tinsel, nor hesitate to empty out the dustbin of the silliest of gossip on the heads of Plato and Aristotle, Herakleitos and Empedokles.¹ It is true that Christianity was for him a philosophy, yes the philosophy of barbarians,² and was older than all the wisdom of the Greeks. Justin had described Moses as the source of certain Platonic doctrines,³ but Tatian went further and boldly declared that the "wisdom of the Greek sophists" had, owing to misunderstanding and conceit, been plagiarized from its Old Testament source.⁴ He provided the proof of these assertions in a very rough and ready manner, in as far as he transcribed chronological tables page after page, and so proved that Moses lived before the Trojan war and the period of the Greek heroes.⁵ He prefers to spend much time on the subject of the daemons, their characteristics and their activity,⁶ from which latter he believes himself redeemed by Christ;⁷ whereas the doctrine of the logos is only dealt with in a passage where the context requires it, and with much restraint as compared with Justin.⁸ His disinclination towards the "killing of animals in order to eat meat" appears even in this writing;⁹ at a later date his ascetic tendencies, in particular his rejection of marriage, made him an opponent of the Church.¹⁰ We have already discussed his significance as the author of a Gospel-Harmony.¹¹

In the case of Athenagoras of Athens, Tatian's contemporary, the daemons also played a considerable rôle, and the doctrine of the logos is still less evident. Apparently neither of these two men was willing to recognize, in the extra-Biblical world, "the seed-corn of the logos", which Justin had brought into discussion. Athenagoras, however, was not animated by

¹ Tatian 1-3

² *Op. cit.*, I. 12. 29. 31. 35

³ Justin, *apol.*, 59 f.

⁴ Tatian 40,1

⁵ *Ibid.* 31-41

⁶ *Ibid.* 9,1. 12. 14-17

⁷ *Ibid.* 29,2

⁸ *Ibid.* 5,1-3. 7,1

⁹ *Ibid.* 23,2

¹⁰ Eus., *H.E.*, 4,29,1-3. Epiph., *haer.*, 46,1,1-2,3

¹¹ *Supra*, p. 99

Justin's passionate hatreds; he used words acknowledging the Greek sages, although only to prove in the end that they all contradicted one another because they drew the urge for research from their own souls. As distinct from this, the prophets were impelled by the spirit of God, and thereby enabled to bear unanimous testimony to the divine truth.¹ Hence, he put Christianity forward as of equal standing with philosophy, and from this standpoint he required tolerance on the part of the state:² yet in reality Christianity was not rational, as Justin would have his readers believe, but divine revelation of a unique kind; the enthusiasm of prophetic ecstasy was not a "human" proof, but it did provide absolute truth.³

It is most significant that the writings of the prophets, even apart from the question of the proof offered by prophecy, enjoyed overwhelming respect among the apologists: Justin, Tatian, and Theophilus declared that they had been converted by studying them. Even in the fourth century, when Augustine was in a state of hesitation, he was referred to the prophet Isaiah by Ambrose his confessor, although on this occasion without consequence.⁴ In the case of Athenagoras, the irrational element, implied by making this reference to the prophets, is not explicitly brought out; that would have contradicted his cast of mind. He tried to hide the genuine inconsistency between his religion and all philosophy; and indeed he attempted to explain the resurrection of the flesh to the Greeks in a special writing: this writing concluded with the dictum⁵ that the goal of human life was "to rejoice in the contemplation of the Creator and His counsels without ceasing"—a form of statement influenced by both the Bible and philosophy.

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, who wrote⁶ shortly after A.D. 180, introduced no new elements into the body of apologetic which we have already discussed: he wrote a more pleasing Greek, brought somewhat more of superficial learning to the front than did his predecessors, and, after acknowledging that pagan writers had some glimpses of the light, came on the

¹ Athenag., *suppl.*, 7, 1 f.

² *Ibid.* 1-2

³ *Ibid.* 9, 1

⁴ Justin, *dial.*, 7, 1-8, 1. Tatian 29. Theoph. 1, 14. Augustine, *conf.*, 9, 5, 13

⁵ Athenag., *res. mort.*, 25; cf. 13, and the reference in *suppl.* 31, 3

⁶ Theoph., *ad. Autol.*, 3, 27

whole to an out and out rejection of all Greek wisdom. He contended that it was drawn only from recent sources, and would not bear comparison with the ancient teachings of the Old Testament prophets.

The *Letter to Diognetus*, which has come down to us anonymously, is elegant in style and cursory in content—it is possible that Diognetus is to be identified with the tutor of Marcus Aurelius. Its idyllic description of Christianity and its epigrammatic phrasology are very famous. Here also is to be found the phrase confessing that Christians are pilgrims on earth:¹ “every strange city is their home-town and every home-town is strange to them”—we must not translate with the term “native land” in a patriotic sense (motherland) since this conception was lacking in the ancient world.²

Patriotism, however, was intended by Caecilius the Roman when, in the graceful dialogue *Octavius*, he laid upon the heart of his Christian opponent the majesty of their common, ancestral religion, and its connection with the glorious history of Rome; and when he bespoke recognition on its behalf.³ The only pity was that he premised the frank confession that, as a philosophical sceptic, he did not believe in these things, but only held them in respect. *Octavius* answered trenchantly⁴ that Roman history was a sum-total of godlessness, wickedness, and violence, and had nothing to do with gods. He did not regard this history as his affair, he, no more than the other millions in the Empire. Only when rhetorical effect required it did one speak patriotically—and it is significant that the entire discussion on religion was based on the kiss which Caecilius the patriot threw with his hand, not to some ancient Roman religious image, but to a chapel of Sarapis. The rest of what Caecilius adduced in objection against the Christians, and what *Octavius* said in reply to his opponent, is confined to the familiar orbit, although it is well stated and impressively arranged. Thus the dialogue of Minucius Felix, which was written c. A.D. 200, becomingly opened the field of Latin apologetics.

¹ *Epist. ad Diog.* 5,5

³ *Min. Felix., Oct.*, 6 f.

² Celsus is instructive in *Orig.* 8,73 f.

⁴ *Ibid.* 25

Chapter Eight

ASIA MINOR AND THE MONTANIST MOVEMENT

CHRISTIANITY TOOK ROOT MOST RAPIDLY ON THE SOIL WHICH had benefited by ancient Greek civilization in the west of Asia Minor; from those regions it spread northwards along the sea-washed coasts. It also penetrated inland wherever the Greek tongue was spoken. It always began in the greater towns, then obtained adherents in the villages, and finally in the countryside. On the whole, however, the frontiers of its conquests halted before regions dominated by the national peculiarities of the innumerable peoples of Asia Minor, and where their strange languages were still spoken: that remained the case for many centuries.¹ Orthodox Christianity followed in the footsteps of Greek civilization, and, in Asia Minor, this was many-sided and had very attractive qualities. Ephesus, where the Christian mission had been founded by Paul, constituted the headquarters. From thence the message was carried into the Lycus valley and into Phrygia, where apparently it spread rapidly. At an early date, Smyrna became a second point which radiated Christian influence; the Revelation of John shows that Sardes and Pergamon were already known as Christian cities, and, in the course of the second century, churches were to be found in the coastal cities of Byzantium, Nicomedia, Amastris, and Sinope, and in the chief cities of the inland provinces of Galatia (Ancyra) and Cappadocia (Cæsarea).² The Christian churches of Asia Minor were proud of their special tradition: they could not only lay claim to Paul, but they were connected with Jerusalem by Philip the Evangelist; and the Johannine circle had given the Church the Fourth Gospel, round about which at an early date gathered the legend of John of Ephesus. Powerful forces of many kinds operated in that region; the Christians of Asia Minor were awake to the facts, and spared no effort to let the rest of Christendom share in their advantages.

¹ Holl., *op. cit.*, 2,238–248

² Details brought together by Harnack, *Mission*, 4th edit., 2,732–785

We have already seen how the dispute about Easter set these churches in strong opposition to opinion in Rome. The theologians who discussed the Christological problem started from Asia when they began their triumphant march to Rome, and thus to the rest of the occident. The first to come to our notice is a tanner of Byzantium, Theodosius by name, who, towards the end of the second century, removed to the capital of the empire and there developed the "dynamist" doctrine. This doctrine held that the spirit of God (= Christ) dwelt in the human Jesus as an inspiring power;¹ the school worked this theology out further with the aid of philosophy, and even after their master broke with the church, the school continued to grow considerably.² A short time later, Noëtos of Smyrna appeared in Rome with the "Monarchian" doctrine that God Himself had become flesh, had walked on earth in the figure of Jesus Christ, had been martyred, and had died: the Invisible had become visible, the Unbegotten had been born, the Immortal had been put to death.³ He stated the secret of the person of Jesus in these paradoxes, and thereby gained the allegiance of many hearts and minds.

Praxeas was a contemporary of Theodosius, and came from Asia Minor to Rome, where he laboured for some time and then went to Carthage; here Tertullian attacked him passionately and, as he claims, vanquished him.⁴ Praxeas, too, regarded it as crucial to emphasize the unity of the godhead. "I and the Father are one"; "he who hath seen me hath seen the Father also"; "I am in the Father, and the Father in me": these he regarded as Jesus' decisive pronouncements about Himself.⁵ It followed that the Father had experienced birth and passion. Praxeas taught that Almighty God was, Himself, Jesus Christ, God had made Himself into His own Son; the Lord had said "I am God and beside me there is no God".⁶ Thus Praxeas firmly repudiated all forms of the logos speculation which attempted to assert a divine Son as an independent being side by side with God the Father; what led to this repudiation of the trinitarian explanation of the Rule of Faith was the "plain

¹ Hippol., *Refut.*, 7,35. Epiph., *Haer.*, 54,1,3-3,1. 5. cf. *supra*, 175 f.

² Hippol., *In Eus.*, *H.E.* 5,28,8-12

³ Hippol., *Refut.*, 10,27. c. *Noetum* i p. 43,10. Lagarde

⁴ Tert., *adv. Prax.*,

⁵ *Ibid.* 20. John 10: 30, 14: 9, 11

⁶ Tert., *op. cit.*, 2, 10, 20; cf. Is. 45: 51

man's" fear of polytheism.¹ Nevertheless even Praxeas recognized the Biblical distinction between Father and Son, except that he did not look for the hall-marks in the sphere of the godhead. The fact that he had a body was characteristic of the Son; the sufferings took place in the body, and thus the godhead, which was identical with the Father, did not actually suffer, although it shared in the sufferings which the body underwent.² In this manner, Praxeas avoided the objection which made the godhead capable of suffering and therefore "changeable", and which would have been philosophically impossible. Praxeas sought to escape the paradoxes which Noëtos had emphasized, and, in so doing, had given the discussion a broader basis.

The disputes which were fought out in Rome and Africa, and of which we have records, had already been the subject of theological inquiry in Asia Minor, but without a decision having been arrived at. We only learn that the presbyters of Smyrna had opposed Noëtos's doctrine of unity, and had taught the duality of God and Christ as given in the Rule of Faith; and they excommunicated him.³ This was not a theological solution, and Monarchianism continued to be the popular view; we shall have to take notice of its influence in the following centuries. It gave rise to ever-new forms based on a devout, naïve belief in redemption through the sacraments, a belief which regarded the incarnation of the godhead as the guarantee of the future apotheosis of mankind, and was satisfied with any theological formulas leaving room for this fundamental conception. If, however, the incarnate Christ was distinguished from God as a separate being, this belief was attacked, and could not be saved by any attempts at compromise. For naïve thought, there was only one God—the monotheistic dogma stood impregnably firm—and He had become man in Christ. A divine logos side by side with God was a second God, as even Justin had recognized:⁴ the effect of such a doctrine was, firstly, to destroy monotheism, and, secondly, to break the logical sequence of a belief in apotheosis which could not be satisfied with any substitute for God. Thus

¹ Tert., *op. cit.*, 3

² *Ibid.* 27

³ Hippol., *c. Noet.*, I p. 43 Lagarde; Epiph., *haers.*, 57, I

⁴ *Supra*, pp. 180 f.

Monarchianism came inevitably into conflict both with the logos doctrine of the Apologists on philosophical grounds, and also with the formula of the Trinity which had grown out of the Rule of Faith. Monarchianism had to fight for its right to live, and this fact conditioned at bottom the great controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. While, among the people, the original views remained unchanged, and continued to dominate their form of religion and thought, the leaders entered into the fighting line of the theories which led to theological dispute and hence to the history of dogma.

To what extent the popular religion of the people of Asia Minor was determined by a sacramental faith is plainly shown by the celebrated epitaph of Aberkios of Hieropolis,¹ a small Phrygian town between Eumenia and Synnada—not to be confused with Hieropolis in the Lycus valley. It cannot be determined whether Aberkios was a bishop, but it may be regarded as entirely probable that he was identical with the Avircius Marcellus to whom an anti-montanist writing was dedicated in that region c. A.D. 183. In any case, the inscription dates from the end of the second century. At 72 years of age, Aberkios himself composed this epitaph and told of the greatest event of his life: a visit to Rome from which he had, at last, returned home by way of Syria and Mesopotamia. He makes use of poetic forms and phrases, and is fond of esoteric similes, which he expects Christian readers to understand.² He claims to be a disciple of the holy Shepherd who had taught him the nature of Christian wisdom. The shepherd had sent him to Rome—i.e. he had been sent there on church business—“in order to see the imperial majesty and to behold the queen clad and shod in gold.” By this phraseology he means the city of Rome, the polite language used by a loyal Christian in the enlightened period of the Antonines: under Domitian, Christians spoke of the Babylonian harlot on the seven hills.³ There he saw the people with the shining seal, i.e. the Christian Church: but everywhere throughout Syria and on the Euphrates, he had found fellow believers, for Paul had travelled in

¹ The best commentary is that of F. J. Dölger, *Ichthys*, 2,454–507. A pagan explanation of the inscription is no longer worth discussion

² Verse 19, “Every fellow believer who understands is asked to pray for Aberkios”

³ Rev. 17:3, 5, 9 18

the same coach with him—he is using poetic language to say that he had carried with him a copy of the Pauline letters as an invaluable book of devotion. Faith went on in advance of him, and everywhere prepared for him the feast, i.e. the fish from the source, the fish which the Holy Virgin had caught, i.e. wine and bread for the brethren everywhere.

This is not the place to explain in detail the phrases employed in the poem. The crucial point is quite certain, viz. that, to the author, the eucharistic meal brings about the unity of Christians throughout the world. To those who partake, it gives the divine nourishment of the “fish from the source”, i.e.¹ “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour”. The fish and the shepherd represent the symbolism of the period round about A.D. 200, which we have already discussed; and the pictures of the Lord’s Supper, as found in the Roman “Chapels of the Sacrament”,² prove that Aberkios was entirely right when he recognized the principles of his faith as the same amongst all the brethren. Moreover, he found that Paul was revered everywhere; but, for his own type of religion, the vital factor was fellowship in the heavenly food provided by the sacrament. We shall do well to keep this manner of thinking and feeling steadily in mind: its roots can be plainly seen even in the faith of the Pauline and Johannine churches, and in many respects those roots go deeply down into the soil of nature religion.³

Taken as a whole, the Church was developing a strong life of its own, based on recognized officials, a canon of scripture, and a creed; it built up guarantees against gnostic speculations and the caprices of enthusiasm. Meanwhile, throughout its entire conduct of life, it sought peaceful association with the surrounding world. While this was taking place, the driving forces of the earlier period continued to be active in the isolated regions of the mountain valleys in Asia Minor, and, soon after the middle of the second century, gave rise to the movement of “the new prophecy” which, at a later period, was known as the heresy of Montanism. We have seen with what reluctance the free operation of those, who possessed the spirit of enthusiasm in the earliest period, came into opposition with efforts to gain order in the Church, and with efforts to

¹ *Supra*, p. 106

² *Supra*, pp. 144 f.

³ Vol. I, pp. 124 f., 140, 244

present a clear didactic message; similarly we have seen how the churches mistrusted false prophets and their fraudulent devices. Nevertheless the Church had no desire, and was not able, to "quench" the spirit, but was prepared to recognize it if revealed with unexceptionable clarity—it must be admitted that all responsible persons regarded such events with anxiety, and were always inclined to prefer a healthy pedestrianism to "proofs of the spirit and of the power". By their very nature, bishop and prophet were opposites in this respect, and could not be otherwise; in this matter, no change has taken place up to the present day. Owing to this fact, the Roman Catholic Church has developed its wonderful organic hierarchy, and this operates as an abiding ever-present vehicle and mediator of the Holy Spirit by combining office and sacrament. Side by side with this hierarchy, new vehicles of the spirit have continued to arise in their own right, and, either alone, or evolving into movements and organizations, they have compelled recognition of their genuine "spirituality". The two lines of development are, by nature, mutually contradictory—and frequently in history this has meant mutual exclusion—but the consciousness of possessing a common root in genuine, early Christianity has, on the whole, been stronger than the feeling of opposition to any particular form of the phenomenon.

The first new flame of the early vehemence of the spirit took place c. A.D. 156 in Ardagau, a village on the borders of Mysia and Phrygia;¹ its situation cannot now be determined. Here Montanus, newly baptized, was suddenly seized by the spirit; he fell into ecstasy, and showed all the manifestations of glossolalia; this soon changed into rational speech, and revealed the speaker as a prophet of the Holy Spirit. Two women, Prisca and Maximilla, became his disciples, and they also, when in an unconscious state, uttered strange things, and spoke in the name of the divine Spirit. Doubt and faith struggled with one another amongst those who were present, but faith conquered; and, throughout the land of Phrygia, the news spread rapidly of a new, and now quite final, revelation of God through these His new prophets. Their pronouncements were written

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,16,7. Epiph., *haer.*, 48,1,2. The most important sources collected in N. Bonwetsch, *Texte z. Gesch. d. Montanismus* (*Kl. Teste* 129), 1914. Greater detail in Labriolle, *Les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme* 1913

down and gathered together as sacred documents similar to the words of the Old Testament prophets, the sayings of Jesus, and the letters of his Apostles.

A few citations from such books of sayings have survived, plainly showing the ecstatic and enthusiastic character of this form of prophecy. As in the case of the ecstatic referred to by Celsus,¹ neither did Montanus speak in his own name as man; rather the spirit of God was the speaker:² "Lo, man is like a lyre, and I strike that lyre as the plectron would strike it. Man sleeps and I wake. Lo, it is the Lord who takes away men's heart and gives them another", or "No angel, no messenger is here, but I, the Lord, God the Father, have come Myself", "I am the Lord God almighty, transformed into a man". In sentences like these, the Monarchian theology maintains its place in unbroken continuity and naïve form; hence the formula of inspiration might have a trinitarian sound:³ "I am the Father and the Son and the paraclete"—there was only the one Almighty God and Father, who had revealed Himself in Christ, His Son, and who now proclaimed Himself through the mouth of Montanus as the paraclete prophesied in John's gospel:⁴ three names for the one being. The new enthusiasm possessed all the quality of that experienced among the early Christians. Montanists interpreted it as an invasion of the divine, which irresistibly overpowered one's own human nature. The prophetess, Maximilla,⁵ was compelled to proclaim the wisdom of the Lord: she was "forced to do so with or without her own consent"; that was genuine prophecy, and it included the bitter complaint: "I am pursued like a wolf out of the sheep fold; I am no wolf: I am word and spirit and power".

Yet what was taking place in Phrygia was not a re-vitalization of the general enthusiasm of the primitive period. At first, we hear nothing of the phenomena of ecstasy spreading among the crowd, nor of a contagious glossolalia such as is occasionally to be observed, ever and again, in the course of the Church's history, and such as flames up even to-day in Methodist gatherings. Only quite gradually did the movement again set

¹ *Supra*, p. 55
⁴ Vol. I, p. 231

² Epiph., *haer.*, 44,4,1. 11,9. 11,1
⁵ Epiph., *haer.*, 48,13,1. Eus., *H.E.*, 5,16,17

³ Didymus, *de trin.*, 3,41,1

the old fires alight in individual churches, and, side by side with, or else after, the great three, only gradually were all sorts of minor prophets called forth into the open. Originally there were but three persons who were seized by the spirit and who laboured as prophets, and they were conscious of their uniqueness: "After me," said Maximilla,¹ "no other prophet will come, but only the final End." This prophecy was not meant to be imitated, but to be recognized as God's concluding revelation.

What was its content? In the first place, expectation of the immediate end of the world as proclaimed by wars and rebellions.² The severe distresses, occasioned by the wars of Marcus Aurelius and the dreadful years of epidemic,³ were really quite fitted to pass as heralds of the final age, and reveal the four apocalyptic horsemen riding over the earth.⁴ In other regions, also about this time, there was a feeling that the world would soon end. In the province of Pontus, a bishop was tortured by visions in dreams which revealed the future to him. He prophesied to his church that the Last Judgement would come within two years: thereupon the members of the church got rid of house and goods, cultivated the fields no longer, but, in fear and trembling and with tearful prayers, waited for the last day. In Syria, a bishop led his whole church, including the children, into the wilderness to meet Christ at His second advent: they wandered about, and were saved from dying of starvation by a none too friendly intervention on the part of the police.⁵

Similarly the "Phrygian" prophets lived in expectation of the imminent end of the world; and the Revelation of John (21: 1-10) had stamped on their souls the picture of the holy city of Jerusalem as it would descend from heaven upon the reborn earth. Pepuza, a country-town which lay between Peltai and Dionysopolis, is recorded as the place where the future New Jerusalem would come. Here Christ, in the form of a shining female figure, appeared in a dream to Prisca when she was asleep;⁶ He "caused wisdom to sink into her heart and had

¹ Epiph., *haer.*, 48,2,4

² Eus., *H.E.*, 5,16,18

³ *Supra*, pp. 18 f.

⁴ Matt. 24: 7 and parallels; Rev. 6: 2-8

⁵ Hippol. on Dan. 4: 18 f.

⁶ Epiph., *haer.*, 49,1,3. 48,14,1

revealed to her that this was a holy place, and here would Jerusalem descend out of heaven". In another passage, the neighbouring place of Tymion is mentioned side by side with Pepuza as the locus of the eschatological expectation; thither all believers were to gather to await the Lord. In the following period, however, we hear only of Pepuza as the holy site, and here at a later date the central authorities of the Montanist church made their headquarters.¹ Epiphanius heard² that, until his own day, men and women used to practise sleeping in the temple there, in the hope that Christ would appear to them just as he had done to Prisca; but these were only later forms of Montanism, and we must beware of predinating them of the earlier period.

On the basis of these clearly defined "chiliastic" eschatological expectations, the new prophecy led to a very rigorous code. Marriage was an earthly bond which prevented full consecration to God—Paul had already taught that much in a similar situation. Hence, the prophetesses abandoned their husbands in order to live entirely for their calling as preachers. Possibly they recommended others to follow their example;³ certainly they advised against new marriages, as was also done by the bishop of Pontus already mentioned.⁴ It is possible that Prisca, even at an earlier date, had been inclined to asceticism, and had lived with her husband in "spiritual marriage",⁵ before she left him: at least, she permitted herself to be described by the church as virgin, and, in one speech, she laid emphasis upon the value of continence for the reception of revelations.⁶ The earliest notices, at any rate, are quite definite in saying that the Phrygians had prohibited marriage altogether: only in Tertullian's writings, and at a still later time, was the prohibition of a second marriage remarked as a peculiarity of theirs.⁷ That ascetic tendencies conformed to popular ideas is proved by the various apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* of that period, among which at least the *Acts of Paul* originated in Asia Minor. Here celibacy appeared as a mark of genuine

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,18,2. Jer., *epist.*, 41,3,2

² Epiph., *haer.*, 49,1,2. 4

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,18,2

⁴ Hippol., *loc. cit.*

⁵ Vol. I, p. 136

⁶ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,18,3. Tert., *exh. castit.*, 10

⁷ Cf. also Origen, *de principiis*, 2,7,3 p. 151,2. Koetschau, in *epist. ad Titum*, 5,291. Lommatzsch

Christianity,¹ and this view was reflected in the earliest forms of Montanism.

Fasting was a spiritual exercise by which the early Christians prepared themselves to welcome the second advent of the Lord: by fasting they stood "on the watch" (guard-duty fasting).² When the new prophecy infused life again into the expectation of the parousia, a new emphasis on fasting was a closely parallel phenomenon. We are told of regulations for fasting which went beyond the custom of the Church, and Tertullian tells us more exactly what were the rules prevailing in his time and district. The guard-duty fastings, universally practised on Wednesday and Friday, were not only observed until the early afternoon (3 p.m.), but continued until the evening; there were a few additional fast days, and, twice in the year, a week of abstinence (*Xerophagia*) during which succulent foods, meat, and wine³ were not used.

These matters were precisely prescribed because Montanus had a penchant for organization, and, consequently, they created, in orthodox circles, a stronger feeling of being novelties. He organized the distribution of the sacrificial offerings within the churches, and the prophetess, Prisca, demanded the delivery of gold and silver and valuable clothing. Special officials were instituted to care for the collected moneys; itinerant preachers of the new prophecy were supported from the central funds, and were not dependent on the goodwill of the churches they visited, goodwill which was frequently quite uncertain.⁴ This sort of thing gives the impression of a strong and purposeful will controlling the entire movement, and continuing to be effective after the death of the founder. In the fourth century, we find that the sect possessed a patriarch resident in Pepuza, under him being the *koinonoi*, i.e. partakers, associates, whose functions it is impossible to guess; and in addition, in isolated places, were bishops, presbyters, and deacons.⁵

Hence, it would not be correct to evaluate Montanism as essentially a reaction to an early Christian type of vehicle of

¹ *Supra*, pp. 82, 86

² *Supra*, p. 133

³ Tert., *ieiun.*, 1. 2. 10; cf. Jer., *epist.*, 41,3. Hippol., *Elenchos*, 8,19,2

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,18,1-4

⁵ Jerome, *epist.*, 41,3; cf. *Cod. Justin* 1,5,20,3

the spirit, a reaction directed against a growing official organization: the movement agreed in organizing the leadership of the Church by means of the familiar "elected offices" of bishops, presbyters, and deacons; or at least they adopted this form of leadership at a later date, without regarding it as a declension from their first principles. Moreover, women were admitted to these offices after having received proof, in Prisca and Maximilla, that even the female sex was able to receive the Holy Spirit: a feature offensive to the regular Church.¹ Epiphanius also tells of a procession of seven virgins clad in white, who solemnly entered the church, with lights in their hands, in order to speak to the people, and deliver prophetic utterances calling to repentance.² This again was probably a later development. The earliest form of the movement in Phrygia restricted prophecy to the three known principal persons: no other prophets were to arise after them; but the End was to come, and for this the call to repentance prepared the way. The parousia, however, once more delayed arrival, opponents lustily scoffed about it³—but the only result was a further operation of the spirit in numerous men and women in several churches; these persons accepted the tradition coming down from the beginning of the movement, and passed it on to the following generation. It was now that Montanism cultivated enthusiasm to the extent known during the early Christian era. It is to this period that the virgins belong, of whom Epiphanius tells, and here also the prophetic "sister" at Carthage.⁴

It is easy to understand that a Christianity of this kind, which lived in the world of the future, was opposed emphatically to the kingdoms of this world: genuine Christians who belonged to these churches did not avoid persecution by taking to flight, but met them with defiance; and sometimes temperament even drove them to the attack. The *Acts of the Martyrs* recount more than one case of voluntary surrender on the part of a

¹ Epiph., *haer.*, 49,2,5; cf. Firmilian in Cyprian, *epist.*, 75,10. A Gallic writing in Labriolle, *op. cit.*, 227,8

² Epiph., *haer.*, 49,2,3

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,19. Epiph., *haer.*, 48,2,4–7

⁴ Epiph., *haer.*, 49,2,3. Tert., *de anima*, 9; cf. also *Mart. Pol.* 4, *Mart. Vienne* in Eus., *H.E.*, 5, 1,49; cf. *Acta Pionii* 11,2; cf. *Acta Carpi* 42–44

"Phrygian", and Tertullian¹ bears witness to a stern, prophetic saying: "Do not desire death on a sick-bed, in childbirth, or by a mild fever, but by martyrdom to the honour of Him who suffered for you." The faithful, indeed, actually preferred martyrdom.

From the very beginning, the Phrygian prophecy greatly excited men's minds. What took place here was in line with the ancient tradition; indeed it could be regarded throughout as the fulfilment of the promise in John's gospel, that a paraclete would come and lead Christian believers into all truth. That is how these prophets desired their work to be understood, and they met with considerable acceptance. But in the normative regions, where the Church was already far advanced, there was hesitation. We have already seen the various kinds of defence that had been laboriously built up to protect the Church against gnosticism and arbitrary caprices. The regular officials of the Church, who stood in the apostolic succession, refused to recognize this form of prophecy although it put forward the highest claims; and, in the New Testament canon of apostolic writings, which was at that time just beginning to take definite shape, no suitable place could be found for the records of the new prophets. The problem was, however, to know how to deal with the novelty. In content, Montanist preaching apparently offered nothing that could be seized on as contrary to the doctrine of the Church, and to the canon of Scripture; hence it was not possible to refute it from this standpoint—in the way that one could deal with gnosticism.

Therefore, the only remaining recourse was to attack the persons, i.e. to raise doubts about the genuineness of the prophetic movement itself on the ground of a "proving of the spirit" by the deeds of its instruments. This method was then diligently employed, and we are told of commissions² sent out in order to expose Maximilla as a fraud: but the adherents "stopped the mouths" of these critics. Thereupon their moral conduct was tested, and all sorts of objections were brought against them, and finally also against their adherents; to the extent of circulating stories that Montanus had committed suicide, and that their patron, Theodosius, threw himself over a

¹ Tert., *fuga*, 9; *anima*, 55

² Eus., *H.E.*, 5, 16, 17. 18, 13

precipice—stories which our informant himself did not believe.¹ Later, we are told of the horrors of mysteries in which the blood of a slaughtered child played a part.² Here we have got down to the level of the usual gossip about heretics.

On the other hand, in the earliest period, there was criticism of the martyrdoms. On one side it was said: you have no martyrs, hence you lack the spirit which you pretend to possess. On the other side, however, the existence of numerous martyrs was acknowledged, but attention was drawn to the fact that the true martyrs, as recognized by the Church, refused to be associated with the Phrygian martyrs already in prison.³ Since, in the general view, martyrs in prison were vehicles of the spirit, the refusal to recognize the imprisoned Phrygians was an authoritative pronouncement of the spirit, and held good in regard to the whole movement.

There was considerable literary activity against the new prophecy: the detailed account in Eusebius rests on several works written during the struggle, and even Epiphanius had sources of that kind at his disposal. Moreover the dispute provided the occasion, for the first time, on which the leaders of the churches in Asia Minor were called together into a common synod;⁴ at various places and on different occasions they discussed ways of effecting a genuine defence, and they decided to exclude the adherents of the movement from the Church. Thus, in spite of itself, Montanism became a sect; nevertheless it spread extensively. It was soon to be found in Rome; c. A.D. 200 it laid hold on Africa, where Tertullian became an enthusiastic advocate of it; and, even at an early date, it found friends in Southern Gaul, a region which was closely connected with Asia Minor. Irenaeus of Lyons⁵ spoke in very earnest tones of sin against the Holy Ghost in the case of those who refused to recognize the new revelations of the paraclete. The Gallic churches of Lyons and Vienne not only sent to the churches of Asia and Phrygia their well-known account of the sufferings of their martyrs, together with their view in matters relating to Montanism, but they also included several writings in which the authoritative persons expressed

¹ *Ibid.* 5, 16, 13–15

³ *Eus., H.E.*, 5, 16, 12, 20–22

² *Epiph., haer.*, 48, 14, 6. *Philastrius, haer.*, 49, 5

⁴ *Eus., H.E.*, 5, 16, 10

⁵ *Iren.* 3, 11, 9 (2, 5¹ Harvey)

themselves on behalf of peace in the Church: they even wrote to Eleutheros, bishop of Rome, in the same sense.¹ Obviously this was an act of intermediation occasioned by the condemnation pronounced by the synod in Asia Minor.

Nevertheless the unity which was sought, was not reached. The dissensions which came to the light of day in the east, broke out also in the west; Rome and Carthage became the focal points of further disputes about Montanism.² In the course of the persecution under Decius, opinions as to the way of dealing with backsliders began to differ widely, and the Montanists took the side of a rigorous radicalism, thereby increasing the sense of hostility towards the church catholic. The struggle went further in Asia Minor, and Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea, tells us not only of a new prophetess who appeared in the year A.D. 236, but, in particular, of a great synod at Iconium which went as far as refusing to recognize Montanist baptism.³ We lack later documentary evidence.

The inscriptions found in Asia Minor have been examined with a view to determining the fate of Montanist churches, but very little material affording any answer has yet been discovered: only a few inscriptions can be declared genuinely Montanist.⁴ About A.D. 370, Epiphanius heard a great deal about Montanist churches still flourishing in Asia Minor, and a little later Jerome testified, from personal experience, to the continued existence of the sect in its ancient highland fortress of Ancyra.⁵ A historian of the fifth century asserted that, by his time, they continued to exist only in Phrygia and the immediate neighbourhood, but otherwise had been eradicated.⁶ Imperial laws promulgated after the days of Constantine continued to order their destruction: the name "Phrygian" constantly recurs in the lists of heretics found in the regulations of the Christian state Church.⁷ A repudiated sect, they disappeared less than 200

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,3. 3,4

² Gaius vs Proklos. Eus. *H.E.*, 2,25,6. 6,20,3 and oft.

³ Firmilian in Cyprian, *epist.*, 75,10.19

⁴ Schepelern, *D. Montanismus u. d. phryg. Kulte* (1929), pp. 81 f., Grégoire, *Byzantion* 8 (1933), 58 ff.

⁵ Epiph., *haer.*, 48,14,2. Jerome, *comm. in Gal. lib.*, 2, Praef. cf. Eus., *H.E.*, 5,16,4

⁶ Sozomenos 2,32,5

⁷ *Ibid.* 2,32,2: The laws are brought together in Labriolle, *op. cit.*, 196–203. 230–35

years after their first appearance. Nevertheless their characteristics continued to live in the Church under other forms and names: faith in the continued renewal of revelations of the Holy Spirit given to men and women specially endowed by grace; passionate contempt for this world, and an all-consuming expectation of the second advent of the Lord.

Chapter Nine

GAUL

QUIET EARLY IN THE SECOND CENTURY, CHRISTIANITY MUST have penetrated the strip of coast which had been colonized from early times by Greeks, and which was dominated by the two ports of Arles and Marseilles. Nevertheless no direct evidence has survived: records begin only in the second half of the third century, and become numerous at the beginning of the fourth.¹ The circumstances are scarcely doubtful, because, as early as A.D. 180, churches existed in the Rhône valley, and in A.D. 177 the persecution of Christians which we have already described,² fell upon the churches at Vienne and Lyons. Vienne belonged to the old Roman province in the republican period; Lyons lay about 20 miles farther north, and Augustus raised it to the capital of Gaul soon after the country had been conquered by Cæsar: the bishop of the capital was also responsible for the church at Vienne,³ and presumably also the small scattered churches in the Rhône valley.⁴ Although the colony of citizens at Lyons was composed of Italians, and had a thoroughly Roman character, nevertheless the Celtic population of Gaul, as well as the Greeks round about the mouth of the Rhône, were represented in the Church.

Here, as in Rome, Christianity was preached in the Greek language, and for a long time Greek remained the speech of the educated class. Among the martyrs of A.D. 177, however, there were already numerous Latin names,⁵ and Bishop Irenæus asserts that he frequently had to speak Celtic:⁶ unfortunately he does not say whether he did so only in everyday intercourse, or also when preaching, especially in seeking to make missionary converts. The latter would appear to be the case, for he occasionally refers to the conversion of uneducated, indigenous people among Celts and Teutons.⁷ Particularly close relations existed between the church at Lyons and the Christians of

¹ Harnack, *Mission*, 4th edit., 2,872–880 ² *Supra*, pp. 161 f. ³ *Supra*, p. 65

⁴ Iren. 1,13,7 (1,126) ⁵ *Martyrol. Hieron.* on June 2

⁶ Iren., *praef.* (p. 1,6 ed. Harvey) ⁷ Iren. 3,4,1 (2,16). 1,10,2 (1,92 f.)

Asia Minor. Yet it is scarcely an accident that only in two cases amongst the martyrs was attention expressly directed to their foreign origin, and both came from Asia Minor: Attalos from Pergamon, and Alexander from Phrygia, the latter being a doctor who "had been settled in Gaul already for many years". Further there was the slave Pontikos, whose native land is indicated by his name;¹ above all, there was Irenæus who at a later date stepped into the office of Potheinos, the martyr bishop; Irenæus was born in Smyrna, and his childhood recollections still connected him with the aged bishop Polycarp.²

These personal relations naturally had spiritual consequences of their own, and the young missionary churches of the west in Gaul adopted ways of thought and manners of life characteristic of Asia Minor, the early homeland of Hellenistic Christianity. We have already seen how the Montanist movement was strongly re-echoed in Gaul; the Lyonese record of the martyrs boasts, among others, of the eminent Alexander the Phrygian physician, whom we have just mentioned, and declares that he was endowed with "apostolic charisma". This is a notice from which we may deduce that he was representative of the secondary type of Montanist prophecy. The attitude of Irenæus to the problem of the new prophecy is everywhere positive, a fact which shows that, in his case, he was not dealing with an exceptional phenomenon, but that its occurrence was joyfully welcomed by the whole Church. The martyrs, even when in prison, took active part in the dispute in the Church as to the recognition of Montanism, and did not dissemble their opinion to Eleutherios bishop of Rome.³ Montanism offers the clearest example of the inner connection between Gaul and Asia Minor; but a closer inspection shows that there were also other threads which linked the Christianity of the two regions. This observation holds true in particular as regards the theology of Irenæus, the episcopal spokesman of the province.

It has just been observed above that Irenæus came from Smyrna, and was born probably c. A.D. 140. He went through the persecution in Lyons as presbyter of the church there:

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,17. 49. 53

² Iren. in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,20,5 f. Iren. 3,3,4 (2,12)

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,3,4-4,2

he conveyed to Rome what the martyrs had written about Montanist questions. After his return he succeeded bishop Potheinos who had succumbed to torture,¹ probably in A.D. 178. We then learn that he took part in the Easter dispute, and spoke on behalf of the independence of Asia Minor as against Rome²—after which we have no further evidence about his doings, or his end. However, we possess more exact knowledge about his theology which, indeed, he wrote in two works; the original text has been lost (as is the case with all the other writings of Irenæus), but has been preserved in reliable translations.

Much the more significant of the two is the *Elenchos*, a “Refutation and Repudiation of False Gnosis” in five books. The Fathers who fought against heretics in the next centuries frequently copied out this primary document, and as a consequence have preserved numerous passages in the original wording. It was then forgotten by the Greek church, with the result that no manuscript containing the whole has survived. In the west, the work continued to be prized. At an early date, perhaps while the author was still alive, it was translated into Latin; this translation was very frequently copied, with the result that more than a dozen manuscripts have survived to our day. Moreover, even the Armenians made a translation, and of this we possess the last two books; an Armenian translation provides us with a substitute for the lost, original text of Irenæus’s second writing which was still extant in Eusebius’s time,³ and which bore the title, *Record of the Apostolic Preaching (Epideixis)*.⁴

This work is a brief compendium of Christian doctrine, and follows closely the lines of the *Elenchos*; perhaps it was conceived as a text-book for the instruction of catechumens, and it presents no new ideas, although in many passages it employs felicitous phraseology.

Irenæus’s *Elenchos* is the oldest surviving work in which the Church repudiated heresy, because the *Syntagma* of Justin, the Apologist, which was composed previously, has been lost. Irenæus dedicated the book to a friend (who is now otherwise

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,1 f. 8

² *Supra*, pp. 176 f.

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,26

⁴ Engl. Trans. by J. Armitage Robinson (S.P.C.K., 1920)

unknown) "and to all who belong to him", i.e. probably a bishop and his church. The book was intended as an aid in the struggle against heretics, in order that the bishop might have an answer for them, but it was also intended to lead wanderers back to the Church, and to strengthen the faith of the newly converted.¹ The inference is that the book is the first comprehensive work belonging purely to the literature of the Church itself. In the first book, the teachings of the Valentinians are described, followed by those of the other gnostics. With the second book, the refutation begins, and, in the following books, gradually becomes a positive account of the true doctrine of the Church. Nowhere is there any particular plan, or any general train of thought; and the range of what is said, and the crowd of repetitions, make it less attractive to read than the subject-matter promises. Nevertheless, on account of its content, the whole is extremely important; at the same time, it shows us what degree of education prevailed in those Christian circles where representatives of gnostic speculation were attempting to make converts.

It was the same people who read the writings of the Apologists and the tractates of the gnostics: they belonged to a middle-class which was proud of its education, but was nevertheless rather maladroit; yet they were now providing the leadership in Christendom. They were very much attracted by the gnostics' esoteric doctrines of wisdom, based ultimately on doctrines which Jesus was held to have taught in confidence to the disciples of His most intimate circle, and that were only intended to suit a small group of the elect as a special privilege. Irenæus, however, passionately repudiated the whole of the artificial speculations, and the extraordinary explanations of Biblical passages; and not seldom did he succeed in firing a bullet which found its billet in the inconsequences of their method. He recalls his readers to a sound common sense; he endeavours to make clear the eternal and fundamental truth that God has placed bounds to our knowledge; and that the problem of scientific inquiry consists in examining the area which is open to our powers of understanding. These are the things of this world as they lie before our eyes; and over and

¹ Iren. 1 *praef.*, 5 *praef.* (1,5. 2,313)

above them are the plain and obvious pronouncements of Holy Scripture. He who exercises unrestrained imagination on the gospel parables, and expounds them as he pleases, will of course come to dazzling results; but these results will appear different to every student and disappear in the light of truth. The starting point must be the simple and unambiguous testimonies of Scripture. These are numerous enough to provide firm ground for the whole of Christian knowledge, and to lead Christians into any depths which are necessary for them.¹ As distinct from those who practised gnostic speculations and arrogant intellectualism, Irenæus maintained that it was better and more useful to be simple, and unlearned, and to come near to God in love, than to be puffed up with knowledge, and walk in the ways that blasphemed God.² This point of view has been repeatedly stressed by Church Fathers and scholastics, and argued in a variety of ways.

What God did before He created the world He had hidden from us. The knowledge, which came from Scripture, was sufficient, viz. that He had created it, and every attempt to answer the other question led to foolish and culpable perversions of the idea of God.³ Nor were we able to understand the cause of evil in the world: why some beings had fallen away from God, why others had remained faithful, God had not explained to us and we must be content. It was impossible for us ever to analyse God.⁴ But, alternatively, God had given to our hand everything that it was necessary for us to know. His revelation was made plain in Holy Scripture, in the pronouncements of the prophets, the Apostles, and the Lord Himself.⁵

Irenæus's New Testament canon comprised, besides the four gospels and the Pauline letters, the Acts of the Apostles, the Johannine Epistles, and the Revelation of John; in addition there was 1 Peter and—as the only departure from the apostolic principle—the recent prophetic writing of the *Shepherd of Hermas*.⁶ The sum of the knowledge contained in these writings was put together in the “Rule of Faith”, and this was proclaimed by the Church as the guiding line of truth in the whole

¹ Iren. 2,27, 1-3 (1,347 f.) ² Ibid. 2,26,1 (1,345) ³ Ibid. 2,28,3 (1,352 f.)

⁴ Ibid. 2,28,7 (1,356 f.) ⁵ Ibid. 2,27,2. 28,7 (1,348. 357)

⁶ *Supra*, pp. 98 ff. Iren. 4,20,2 (2,213). Bonwetsch, *Theol. d. Iren.*, 40

world.¹ Lessing's celebrated question in the *Axiomata* 8, whether one could be a Christian without a Bible, would have been answered by Irenæus with an unmistakable Yes, and indeed Lessing did not fail to quote Irenæus's view. If the Apostles had transmitted nothing to us in writing, the tradition which had been continued in the Church would have been sufficient to mediate the whole truth to believers: people in the surrounding districts, who had no Bible, confessed the articles of the Creed.²

The original source of Christian preaching was the teaching of the Apostles; this was to be found in the New Testament writings, and also in the tradition of the Church. Irenæus frequently quotes items of information from the "ancients" who had had intercourse with the Apostles. But he felt that the broad current of tradition flowed in the living channels which had been guarded by the succession in office of the presbyters instituted by the Apostles, i.e. by the bishops. The charism of truth, which had been granted by God to the episcopal office, guaranteed the purity of the doctrine which had been transmitted in this way,³ and this charism was to be identified with the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Church.⁴ As the most eminent, the oldest, and the best known example of such a traditional series of bishops, Irenæus cites the Roman Church, which had been founded by the Apostles, Peter and Paul; on account of its overwhelming pre-eminence, every other church must agree with its teaching—hence, also, it was superfluous to adduce any other series of successive bishops.⁵ The word "must" was of course not a legal prescription, but a logical consequence from the universal validity of the principle of tradition as guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

If we now inquire what was the Church's doctrine about God, the answer would be the familiar monotheism of the early Church in both its Biblical and philosophical shape: reference would also be made to our innate, rational knowledge of the one God.⁶ But when Irenæus repudiated gnostic theories of emanation, he became mistrustful towards the logos theology

¹ *Supra*, p. 110 f. Iren. 1,10,1 and oft. Iren., *Epilexis*, par. 6

² Iren. 3,4,1 (2,15 f.) 5,20,1 ³ *Ibid.* 4,26,2 (2,236) ⁴ *Ibid.* 3,24,1 (2,131)

⁵ *Ibid.* 3,3,1 (2,9) ⁶ *Ibid.* 2,6,1 (1,263 f.)

of the Apologists. He would have nothing to do with any essential separation of the logos, or *nous*, from the Father: God was entirely *nous*, entirely logos, entirely operative spirit, and entirely light, and anyone who separated one of these from God would make Him a composite being.¹ Irenæus had a good deal to say about the logos, and made frequent use of this Biblical term occurring ever and anon among the Apologists, but his type of conception was determined by the Monarchianism of his native land; and when he spoke of the incarnation of the logos, he readily employed the favourite paradoxes about the Invisible becoming visible, the Impossible undergoing suffering, and so forth.² We do not hear much among the Apologists about the Holy Spirit, which sometimes appears to be identified with the Son:³ they regarded the logos as identical with the Old Testament Wisdom, "Sophia"; Irenæus makes an exact distinction between the logos, or Son, and Sophia, which is the Holy Spirit:⁴ nevertheless both are only forms of activity of the one God: he calls them significantly on occasion⁵ "the hands of the Father", without, however, entering more deeply into a question which he regarded, not only as beyond the limit of the knowable, but also beyond what was worth knowing.

His thought starts from practical questions of the Christian life. What does the Church confer on mankind? Redemption. Why is redemption necessary? Because men by their sinful lives are subject to death and so pass away, whereas their real desire is for "incorruptibility" (*aphtharsia*). But why does God redeem men? Not because He has need of them, but because it is His will to show them kindness.⁶ Therefore He created Adam, furnished him with body and soul, and endowed him with a will free to do good or evil. As a consequence, at the beginning, Adam possessed a similarity to God which was meant to lead him into fellowship with the spirit of God by living in a manner pleasing to God, and thereby at last make him the perfect image of God endowed with *aphtharsia*.⁷ The Fall destroyed God's plan, and handed Adam and his descendants over to the power of the devil, who was now continually

¹ Iren. 2,28,4 f. (1,354 f.)

² *Ibid.* 3,16,6 (2,87 f.)

³ *Supra*, p. 184

⁴ Iren. 4,20,3 (2,214 f.)

⁵ Iren. 5,1,3 (2,317). 5,6,1 (2,333)

⁶ Iren. 4,14,1 (2,184)

⁷ Iren. 4,37,1-4 (2,285 ff.). 38,3-4 (296 f.). 5,12,2 (351)

successful in turning mankind aside from obedience towards God, and consigning them to death and destruction. Irenæus says nothing, it must be granted, about a natural transmission of inherited sin, nor about any loss of the freedom of the will. Man could still will the good and turn to God: indeed apart from this ability, the exhortations of the prophets would have been quite incomprehensible.¹ And why should God have given the Law?

There were, in the first place, “natural laws”, obedience to which made man righteous—Irenæus held this view in full earnest in spite of Paul—and upon the chosen, but disobedient, people of the Jews God had laid the ritual law, and this afforded a special training when men served it.² Both kinds of laws had been useless. God had then decided upon the act of redemption which was fitted to save the whole of mankind. He reaffirmed the process, begun by Adam but interrupted by the Fall, and sent His Son, the logos, as a life-giving power to mankind. From the Virgin Mary, who was the opposite of disobedient Eve, he took the elements of mankind which descended from Adam, namely body and soul, and by the inner combination of godhead and mankind brought about what our redemption pre-supposed.³ As the second Adam, Christ the god-man, did what the first Adam had failed to do: He fulfilled God’s commandments as a genuine man, and in this way vanquished in all forms of righteousness the sinful and seductive devices of the devil.⁴ In His person He united our flesh and blood, i.e. our body and our soul, with the redemptive power of the godhead, and carried them to incorruptibility, as His resurrection proved. In this way, He perfected the image of God as should have been done by Adam. He became man that we might become gods, i.e. immortal men in the image of God, and “sons of God”, who beheld God face to face, and thereby possessed eternal life.⁵

The work of “recapitulation” which had been completed

¹ Iren. 4,7,2 (2,286 f.)

² Iren. 4,13,1–4 (2,180–83). 15,1 (187)

³ Iren. 3,18,1–2 (2,95). 21,10 (120). 22,1–3 (121 ff.). 4,38,1 (2,292 f.). 5,1,2 f. (2,316). 5,14,1–3 (2,360–62)

⁴ Iren. 3,18,6 f. (2,100 f.). 5,21,1 f. (2,380–83)

⁵ Iren. 4,20,4. 7. (2,216. 219). 5,7,1 (2,336 f.). 4,33,4 (2,259). 4,38,4 (2,297). 5 *praf.* (2,314). 5,36,2 (2,429)

once for all in Christ, i.e. the rehabilitation of the original, divine plan for the salvation of mankind, was now intermediated in the Church to the individual through the operation of the Holy Spirit. By its sacraments, the Church handed to mortal man the "medicine of life" which united them most intimately with the godhead.¹ In baptism, our bodies received a union with God which brought about incorruptibility, and our souls received the Holy Spirit, which endowed them with the vital and effective power of eternal life.² Man had sinned with body and soul, wherefore both required redemptive deification, without which they were destined to destruction. The philosophical doctrine of the natural immortality of the incorporeal soul, Irenæus definitely set aside: *all* immortality found in a creature was due to a gift of God's grace, and, on account of the close mutual operation of body and soul, *aphtharsia* must comprehend both together.³

The Lord's Supper was the second sacrament which mediated to mankind the redemptive operation of the incarnation of God. In the rite the eucharistic elements of bread and wine received the logos of God and became the flesh and blood of Christ: he who partook fed his body with the flesh and blood of the heavenly Lord, and thereby made it a member of the body of Christ, which now also took part in the eternal life of Christ. It is true that the Christian's body would be laid in the earth and would decompose after death. But, at the right time, he would rise again through the power with which he was endowed by the divine logos, for, in the Lord's Supper, God had endowed what was mortal with immortality.⁴ He who had become a member of the Christian Church by means of the sacrament, i.e. miraculously united with Christ, to such a one earlier sins were forgiven and, having been endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit, he was able to behold God in Christ, and so to obtain a share in the divine life. Moreover, in virtue of this newly-given power, he was in a position to fulfil, in complete and genuine freedom, the "natural" commandments of God as represented in the Ten Commandments and their exposition

¹ Iren. 3,19,1 (2,102 f.)

² Iren. 3,17,2 (2,93)

³ Iren. 2,34,1-3 (1,381-83). 3,18,7 (2,100 f.). 5,6,1 (2,333-35). 5,8,2. (2,340)

⁴ Iren. 5,2,2 f. (2,319-323). 4,18,5 (2,207 f.)

by Christ. He was now a "spiritual man", and joyfully followed the example of Christ, His teachings and works, in thought, word, and deed.¹

By this act of redemption, the "recapitulation" at the "end of the age" of which Paul spoke in Eph. 1: 10 had become fact. Adam's failure stood at the beginning of the history of the world; and similarly at its end, the restoration and continuation of God's work would take place, a work which had been so precipitately interrupted. Mankind renewed, righteous, and even here on earth united with God, marched forward into a new era in the world, a mankind which was fitted for the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth after the conquest of much distress, and after many struggles as recounted in John's Revelation; it was also fitted for an eternal life in a new heaven and on a new earth. Here the goal was reached which God had intended for Adam at his creation, viz. to be the image of God, and to behold God.²

Whereas the Apologists provide us with the theological constructions of a speculative philosophy, which systems reflected the views of educated men, in the case of Irenaeus we find a theology of a fundamentally opposite kind. It is based on a type of religious life determined by the nature of the Church. Christians felt themselves to be a community which owed unconditional obedience to God's will, a community which had been liberated by the operation of divine miracle from the dominance of the devil and of sin, and which felt itself to possess power to live, on a superhuman level, a life of moral purity. The goal of this new life lay in the future kingdom of glory, which would impart to each individual, beyond death and the grave, both immortality and a perfect salvation consisting in the vision of God. The entire interest of theologians was dedicated to the question of how the redeemed might come to reach this form of life. The ecclesiastical phraseology and points of view, which remained unworked out by the Apologists, and which were only mentioned in passing as articles of faith,³ stood now in the foreground, and the work of Christ

¹ Iren. 4,16,4 (2,192). 4,20,4-7 (2,216-219). 5,1,1 (2,314 f.). 5,8,2 (2,340). 5,9,2 (2,342 f.). *Epideixis* 96

² Eschatology in detail cf. Iren. 5,26-36

³ *Supra*, pp. 182-86

received a clear and illuminating explanation. The fundamental question raised by Anselm of Canterbury, why God became man, was propounded and answered: in order that men might become God, in accordance with their original condition. That was the answer provided by the Greek sense of religion, and Irenæus gave classic expression to this common conviction. Christians were the beings endowed with free will, who were newly created and made God-like by means of the sacramental miracle.

On this unremovable foundation, which was always present even where it did not appear to sight, were built the theological systems and the dogmatic edifices of the following centuries; from this standpoint, the right light falls on the disputes about the Trinity and Christology. Irenæus meant to be a Biblicalist, and the main outlines of his theology were sketched by Paul. Both the antithesis between Adam and Christ, and the doctrine of the identity of the conquest of sin in Christ and in Christians, are to be found in the Pauline letters,¹ and a number of discussions of single issues refer back to Paul's own words.

What is lacking, however, is the absoluteness of the antithesis which was crucial for Paul. Original sin, together with the impossibility of man's own righteousness, i.e. at bottom Paul's doctrine of justification, was entirely and necessarily passed over. Moreover, the theology of the Cross and the doctrine of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ were also omitted, or only employed incidentally and were not essential to the thought. The vital act of redemption was the incarnation of Christ and not His death, and the faith which made men righteous was the acceptance of the Church's message of the miraculous power of the sacrament. Irenæus's theology, it may be granted, made use of Pauline conceptions: but its own contribution was the further development of a faith proper to the Church, a faith which had been evolved out of the Pauline ideas, and which can be recognized in a simpler form as early as the letters of Ignatius.² Behind all the discussions put forward by these theologians, was to be found the simple faith of the churches of Syria and Asia Minor, churches which were as yet undisturbed by discussions of the philosophical problem of the forgiveness of

¹ Vol. I, pp. 117-23

² Vol. I, pp. 237 ff., 240 f., 244 f.

sins, and which, practising the naïve rigorousness of the first Church, represented the community of the saints. Irenæus's title to fame is that his "system" grew out of a religious life which was found in church people, and which was faithful to its roots. Educated people in the orient, however, made higher claims of a philosophical sort, and thus it came about that the work of the bishop of Lyons seemed to them unsatisfactory: the occident proved more grateful.

Chapter Ten

AFRICA

THE CHURCH IN NORTH AFRICA ENTERED THE LIGHT OF history at the same time as the Church in Gaul; but, whereas immediately after Irenæus, the latter once more fell back into a long period of obscurity, the former continually increased in significance for the entire Church. During the course of her history, from Tertullian to Cyprian and then to Augustine, she was the teacher of the entire Christian Church in the west. Similarly to South Gaul, Africa was the seat of an ancient Roman colony. The indigenous fair-haired, and blue-eyed Berbers had been kept in subjection by the Phœnicians; the Punic colonists enjoyed a culture predominantly of the city kind, but it fell before the power of the Roman sword. Both the conquered races continued to live in the Roman province of Africa, the Phœnicians more especially in Carthage, when rebuilt, but also elsewhere in the small towns of the country-side. Rome and its language dominated the prevailing culture. The educated classes spoke and wrote Greek until after the beginning of the third century,¹ but it was not used in daily life like Latin and Punic. The inscriptions make that fact quite clear. The province enjoyed considerable economic prosperity; after Rome, Carthage was the second metropolis of the west, and, until the present day, the numerous and beautiful Roman buildings, which are scattered over the whole of North Africa, bear testimony to the wide extent of the region which came under the sway of Roman city culture.

In the west, just as was the case in the east, the second century was the period of the greatest prosperity, and when the spiritually productive power of Italy began to decline, Africa started to bring forth new fruits in Latin literature from its own soils. We may grant that, in this respect, the only successful person were the archaic orator Fronto, the philologist Sulpicius Apollinaris, and his disciple Gellius, together with Apuleius, the Roman philosophical and mystical writer;² but even this was more than Italy was able to rival, and the Romans sat at

¹ Greek instruction: Dessau, *Inscr. lat.*, 2937

² *Supra*, p. 25

these men's feet. Christianity was the power which first enabled natives of Africa to contribute towards permanent literature.

We have no information as to how the new religion penetrated into Africa. It may be taken as probable that it arrived there from Rome; the connection between Rome and Carthage was always close, and in the African Church there was a consciousness of a certain dependence on the capital of the Empire.¹ The first emissaries probably spoke Greek, as did the Roman Church. Testimonies have survived as to the use of this language in Christian circles² of Africa c. A.D. 200, and Tertullian occasionally wrote Greek, as was also the case with Apuleius, his slightly older fellow-countryman.

Latin, however, rapidly came to its own in the Church, and we can demonstrate that, towards the end of the second century, Africa already possessed a Latin Bible which contained not only the Old but also the New Testament: Tertullian frequently quotes from this Bible. In view of the fragmentary character of the surviving remains, we must leave the questions unanswered whether this translation was complete, and whether it came into being in Africa as a single work. Probably these questions must be answered differently in regard to separate parts, and we have good ground for assuming that, at the end of the Antonine period, a Latin translation of the Bible was at hand in Rome, a translation markedly different from its African compeers. When Marcion's disciples transferred their propaganda from Rome to Africa, they carried with them their master's New Testament canon in a Latin form of its own.³ In any case, the fact of a Latin Bible in Africa before A.D. 200 testifies to a very considerable dispersion of Romanized Christians in this area. Moreover Latin was in fact the language of the Church here before this was the case in Rome.

The growing adherence of believers of Punic race brought about no change; the accession can be proved by the fourth century, and it probably began considerably earlier. Their own language was used in preaching to the people,⁴ but they were

¹ Tert., *praescr.*, 36

² *Acta Perpetuae* 12,2. 13,4; cf. the Greek translation of *Acta Perpetuae* and *Acta Scillitanorum*

³ H. von Soden in *Festg. für Jülicher* (1927), 273 f. Harnack, *Chronol.*, 2,296

⁴ Zahn, *Gesch. d. neutest. Kanons*, 1,40-42

not provided with a Punic Bible nor a Punic liturgy, any more than was done in the native language in Gaul for the benefit of the Celts. The subject peoples were content, whereas, in the course of time, those in the orient everywhere broke through the fetters of the Greek language, and used Syriac instead. In the third century, we have only occasional traces, and later only sparing information, about the Berber Christians: but we can say with confidence that they were as remote as possible from contact with city culture, and here as everywhere else, the cities were the starting-points of Christianity.

From Tertullian we learn that, in his time, i.e. c. A.D. 200, there were Christians in Carthage and the neighbouring city of Utica; in the small town of Uthina (to-day Odna) which lay to the south, in the seaport Hadrumetum (to-day Sousse); in Thysdrus (El Djem) where a mighty amphitheatre still bears testimony to the whilom significance of the place, and in the great garrison of Lambæsis, the military headquarters of the district of Numidia, to-day known as Algeria. A few places should be added, on the basis of other testimonies, but that exhausts our knowledge of the geographical distribution of Christianity c. A.D. 200.¹ It is but little, yet considerably more than we know about Gaul at the same period.

The history of the Church in Africa begins for our purposes with the martyrdom of the Christians of Scilli, a small place in Numidia whose situation remains unknown. On August 1, A.D. 180, they were condemned and executed by the pro-consul in Carthage: two of the names have a Berber sound, and therefore show that, even at this early date, a successful mission had taken place amongst the indigenous population.

At this point Tertullian came upon the stage, and the great contest began in full earnest: Tertullian had come into conflict with the Church, and had become a Montanist. He had entered into a sharp engagement with the Roman bishop—nevertheless his writings were eagerly read, in ancient days, by young and old, and were preserved in several manuscripts throughout the Middle Ages: so great was the influence of his personality. He was born in Carthage, the son of a centurion in the command at the service of the civil authorities;² he

¹ Harnack, *Mission*, 2,902–04

² Jerome, *vir. int.*, 53

made a reputation for himself as a jurist in Rome, and at a later date returned to Carthage.¹ We do not know when or where he was converted to Christianity, but that he had previously been pagan is testified by his own words.² In the digests of the *corpus juris* there are a few citations of a jurist Tertullian who lived about the same time: it is not impossible that he should be identified with the Church Father.

Jerome asserts that Tertullian had been a presbyter in Carthage, a statement probably in accordance with the facts, because his overwhelming activity as a writer could scarcely have taken place while he was a layman: yet in the writings which have survived, he never refers to his clerical status. The years of both his birth and death are unknown, and can scarcely be indicated even approximately; nevertheless a few of his writings give hints as to the time when they were written, and make it possible for us to say that his work as a writer took place between the years A.D. 195—220; and the writings can, with difficulty, be arranged in chronological order. He became a Montanist at latest in A.D. 207.³ Tertullian is known to us only as a writer; we have no knowledge of him as a man of affairs. But his literary activity was a genuinely great achievement.⁴

He has been called the creator of ecclesiastical Latin, and appropriately so. He was the first who wrote fluently in Latin, and in a stylish manner, on Christian subjects; and he himself created an appropriate religious and ecclesiastical terminology without previous examples: his Latin Bible could not be used for that purpose, and he says so explicitly more than once. Moreover the terminology he created remained to a large extent normative; it was taken over by Cyprian and carried further, and was afterwards regarded without question as the accepted terminology of the west. He gave his speech an artistic form, naturally corresponding to the taste of his time, but with marked personal characteristics.⁵ He never used long periods, but short sentences and phrases usually set in parallel, and with an antithetic content; he made use of puns and sometimes of an echoing rhyme; he piled up questions, gave pointed answers in a staccato style, sometimes in such a twisted

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 2,2,4. Tert., *cult. fem.*, 1,7 ² Tert., *apol.*, 18,4. *resurr.* 59 (3,120,3)

³ Harnack, *Chronol.*, 2,256—296

⁴ K. Holl., *op. cit.*, 3,1—12

⁵ Norden, *Antike Kunstsprosa*, 606—15

form of expression that the meaning becomes enigmatic. Nevertheless, there is always intensity, always movement, always content. It is true that that was the "Asianic" manner of the Greek orators from whose school it was introduced into Africa. Apuleius makes use of the same mode; but in the case of Tertullian a stronger dose of Tacitus's terse style is operative; Roman seriousness flows into Greek journalese, and the temperament of the man, which despised all rules and bounds, was successful in giving a unified effect to the whole.

Tertullian is the first instance of a Christian author who rose, even on formal grounds, far above his contemporaries, and proved himself a master of his own language and style: it would be interesting to know what the pagan readers said about his works. It was for such readers that he consciously wrote: his little writing *de pallio*, in which he justified himself in the eyes of a Carthaginian public for his garb as a Greek philosopher, would only have significance if it were to come into the hands of this very public. And in the case of Tertullian we may assume that even his apologetic writings were also read by others than Christians, as was not the case with the writings of his colleagues, and as he himself assures us with satisfaction.¹ He offered so much that was pleasing to literary palates, and also the content of his writing was too rich to be neglected.

Firstly, in regard to learning, Tertullian's pages are crowded with illustrations and quotations drawn from all spheres of knowledge and from the history of all eras and peoples. The above mentioned writing *de pallio* gives a good idea of the taste of the readers of the period. Tertullian discusses tunics and togas in talking about the downfall of Carthage; change as a principle of evolution in nature and history; fashion and hygiene of both sexes, and the luxury of spendthrifts. Naturally, he drew the incredibly varied fullness of his material from the usual books of reference from which every writer at that time was accustomed to quote, but he polished everything up cleverly, mixed it with the fruits of his own gift of keen observation, and made it all very delightful reading. His work may be compared and contrasted with the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius. This is an alluring title, but it covers the work of a mere bookish,

¹ *Supra*, p. 176, note 2

and dry-as-dust schoolmaster copying out excerpts from authors whom he had himself read, from lexicons of all sorts, and from poetic anthologies: yet that sort of thing passed contemporaneously for learning.

The feature which immediately impresses every reader is Tertullian's passionate temperament. The purpose of his argument is plain from the opening sentence, and he sets out towards his goal with brilliant sequence of thought. All his works are occasional writings, all attack some opponent, and all end with total destruction of the enemy. The opponent is always and completely in the wrong: Tertullian makes that clear point by point in a cogent demonstration well thought out. Philosophy, academic logic, and simple daily common sense, are called in to help if they are appropriate to down his opponent; but sometimes he leaves them on one side and appeals to the written word of Scripture if it serves his purpose better to do so. He is skilled in developing the principles of a sound exegesis according to the verbal meaning and the context, and he can use all this effectively; on the other hand, he sometimes disowns these principles completely, and sets to work with boundless conceits and playful allegories, if this is the only way in which he can vanquish his foe. The purpose completely dominates the means, and any idea of objective relevance is miles distant. Tertullian is an advocate who concentrates all his powers on winning his case; but an advocate who fights with twice the passion because it is also his own case that he is advocating.

That was the way in which he contended with heretics like Valentine and Marcion; similarly he fought the gnosticizing painter, Hermogenes, as well as Praxeas, with both of whom he had had severe personal quarrels. He had already given a neat, juristic proof in a writing of his own,¹ that there was no need to discuss main principles with heretics, because the burden of proof lay upon *them*. He wrote passionately against those who persecuted Christians, and he continually cried out loud for genuinely legal standards, and for justice. Indeed he went so far as to proffer a divine test:² bring a possessed person before the tribunal and let any Christian whatsoever exorcize him;

¹ Tert., *de praescr. haer.*

² *Apol.* 23,4–6

immediately the evil spirit will confess himself as a daemon in accordance with the truth. Place there an enthusiast who has drawn into himself, from the sacrificial smoke, the godhead of Tanit or of Eshmun; and if these godheads do not confess themselves as daemons when conjured by the Christian, there and then let the Christian pay for his temerity with his life.

Tertullian wore a simple mantle and defended it against the prevailing fashion; similarly he combatted rich clothing, rouge and hair dressing, on the part of Christian ladies; and fought against attending stage-plays which many would have agreed to as a permissible pleasure for Christians. He always drew the practical consequences of the plain Christian principles, and did it trenchantly and regardless of results. In this spirit, he dedicated to his wife a writing in which he prescribed permanent widowhood in case of his own death. A second marriage was, from his standpoint, not out and out forbidden, but was nevertheless a surrender to evil among Christians: the second marriage was sinful if contracted with a pagan.

Shortly after A.D. 200, Montanism gained a foothold in Africa, although it was now only a movement of a modified enthusiasm—"the new prophecy" of the paraclete had already been transformed into the written word—but it was very much alive in maintaining the rigour of the early Christian, eschatological, moral code. It is not surprising that Tertullian became a Montanist, nor that he used the sharpest criticism to lash the weak-minded worldliness of the Church when it would have nothing to do with the new spirit. He therefore began to regard the church catholic as an adversary, and, as he had formerly done in the case of heretics, he fell upon it with the same means and with the fanatical hatred proper to a new-baked orthodoxy. Closer inspection shows that the points in dispute were of very varied importance. The Montanists insisted on the practice of fasting; required not only married women, but even young girls, to be veiled, and forbade second marriages; they took up an unaccommodating attitude in the struggle with the state, and were inflexibly hard towards backsliders.

Tertullian increased the sharpness of his tone, not in accordance with the significance of the subject, but with the duration of the struggle, and in the end he did not hesitate to fling

vituperation at the Church's agapēs which he had formerly praised so finely to pagans.¹ He was merciful towards back-sliders, but he insisted that the question of receiving them back should be decided by the vehicles of the spirit, i.e. the prophets; not by "the Church as a collection of bishops"; least of all by the martyrs sitting in prison, about whom Tertullian, when orthodox, had used the most beautiful of language, and whom now he despised and grossly vilified.² His greatest indignation was aroused by the decision of the bishop of Rome,³ when the latter declared officially that he was prepared to forgive a repentant sinner even the sin of sexual immorality: with all the arts of proof from the multitude of Biblical passages, and also by referring to the authority of the paraclete, Tertullian struggled to maintain the uncompromising temper of the early Christians against a Church which, he said, had become worse than a den of thieves.⁴

In spite of this exaggerated change of front, the single, straight line of his development is unmistakable. Tertullian believed himself to have been morally reborn through Christianity: in this regard, he felt, every day, the difference from his pagan past. He defended his faith passionately against persecutors, and as a consequence he was always prepared to take up any movement which seemed to promise an increase of moral strenuousness, itself a divine commandment. For this reason also, he was always inclined to regard the points of view of his opponents as signs of lack of morals, and attacked them accordingly.

He had no theological system, but isolated opinions took shape in him in the course of his struggle with opponents. He regarded the essence of Christianity as the unfolding of a fundamental religious knowledge, which slumbered in every human soul. It came to light in the commonplace sayings that there was only one God, that He was both good and righteous, that daemons were in the world and infect us with evil, that souls lived after death, and would come up for a judgment which would either punish or reward them eternally.⁵ He never

¹ *Apol.* 39,16–21. *Ieiun.* 17 (1,296,25 Wissowa); cf. *Pudic.* 22 (1,271,14. 17)

² Tert., *ad mart. pudic.*, 22 (1,271). *Ieiun.* 12 (1,290)

³ *Infra*, p. 247 ⁴ *pudic.* 1 (1,220) ⁵ Tert., *test. anim.*, 1–4 (1,134 ff.)

attempted, however, to work out a system of doctrine for the Church, and give a clear account of redemption through Christ. For this he lacked the ability. He did, once on a day, write a theoretic work *On the Soul*; it grew into a learned and acute monograph, and on this account is attractive; nevertheless it is without any particular point and is not closely knit. It is not a polemic and as a consequence only a half of Tertullian is really in action. He discusses the question of original sin,¹ but in a manner which lacks complete clarity, and is without insight into the implications.

Taken on the whole, his doctrines are those universal in the Church, but without very great penetration; and he makes sly digs at the gnostics whenever he finds an opportunity² for sharp attacks upon any form of Christianity which tended to an alliance with philosophy. Perhaps it is for this very reason that he so often devised appropriate phraseology. The speculative problems of the Greeks never gave him a headache, and as a consequence he airily pre-empted the results of centuries of dispute when he spoke of the divine *Trinitas*—he devised the word by way of translating the Greek *trias*; the Trinity was of one substance, one essence, and one power, and, at the same time, it signified the Son and the Holy Spirit as the second and third “persons” of the triad.³ He defended the logos doctrine, in the sense of the Apologists, against Praxeas, and taught a strict subordination of the Son to the Father.⁴

With the same happy neatness, he also devised the formula, made use of by later orthodoxy, to express the relation of the divine and the human in Christ: he was God and man, one person in two substances, preserving their own qualities, uncompounded, side by side, and yet combined.⁵ He liked to present readers with formulas of this kind, although they did not proceed from any logical necessity as felt by him, and were not bound up with his religious life in any way. For him, they were a kind of commentary on the Rule of Faith, but had no organic connection among themselves, nor with the other articles of Church doctrine. In Tertullian, the only self-consistent and united thing was his will or intention; his

¹ Tert., *de anim.*, 39–41 (1,366–9)

² Tert., *praescr.*, 7

³ Tert., *adv. Prax.*, 2 (3,229 f. Kroymann), 6 (234,22). 11 244,13. 16

⁴ *Ibid.* 9 (3,239,24) 14 (250,24)

⁵ *Ibid.* 27 (3,281,21. 27)

writings were disparate. Augustine asserted¹ that he was a changeable person, that at a later date he seceded to the Montanists, and, in the end, gathered a church of his own about himself: an assertion which seems quite credible in the case of a man of his character. But we have no actual further knowledge of him after he ceased to employ his pen: hence, he disappears from sight c. A.D. 220.

Round about this period, Christianity in Africa must have extended very greatly, for c. A.D. 250 it had spread everywhere in all parts of the province, the oversight being in the hands of numerous bishops—estimated sometimes at almost two hundred.² The Church grew not only by the accession of newly-converted pagans, but also numerous members found their way back from schismatic and heretical communities.³ Hence arose the question of the validity of a baptism administered in a heretical Church, a question which Tertullian had answered in the negative.⁴ The Carthaginian bishop, Agrippinus—the first of whom we have any trustworthy information—assembled a synod of seventy bishops. They decided that heretics who came back should be baptized afresh, because there was no valid baptism outside the Church.⁵ Agrippinus was succeeded by Donatus, of whom a notice has been preserved incidentally, that he agreed with the verdict of a council of ninety bishops meeting for consultation in Lambæsis: it is possible that he was president.⁶

The first great bishop of the African church now appeared in the person of Cyprian. No information has survived in regard to his early years: but he himself tells us that he was not born in a Christian household, but had had to be converted to the faith.⁷ He had received a careful education in rhetoric, and obviously grew up in well-to-do circumstances; he therefore must have belonged to one of the eminent families of Carthage: his name, Cæcilius Cyprianus with the cognomen Thascius, unfortunately provides us with no further exact information.⁸

¹ *ds haeres.* 86 (8,25b Bened.)

² Harnack, *Mission*, 4th edit., 2,898

³ Cypr., *ep.*, 73,3

⁴ Tert., *bapt.*, 15. (1,213 W.)

⁵ Cypr., *ep.*, 71,4. 73,3. August., *de unico bapt.*, 22 (p. 21 Petschenig)

⁶ Cypr., *ep.*, 59,10; cf. 36,4

⁷ Cypr., *ep.*, 7,1. *ad Don.* 3,4. *Jer., vir. int.*, 67 comes from the valueless *Vita* of Pontius

⁸ Cypr., *ep.*, 66, tit. 4

What converted him to Christianity, he tells us in the little writing dedicated to a friend, Donatus by name. He was disgusted with the prevailing immorality of public and private life, in which he felt himself entangled; disgusted with the ostentation of the wealthy, the corruption of justice, and with all the bloodthirstiness and cruelty. This disgust aroused in him a longing to be free from everything of the sort, but he never dared to hope that his longing would be satisfied. Now, however, he had found by experience that baptism liberated and cleansed him from the old life, gave him new birth, and armed him with the heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit, a gift which endowed him with the power to live a moral life without sin. His prayer re-echoes with gratitude when he asks that God would guard His gracious gift to him. For him, Christianity meant moral liberation.

We do not know when he was baptized, nor how long he served as a deacon or presbyter, because the notices in the early biography can scarcely claim historical reliability. However, in A.D. 248 or the beginning of A.D. 249, he was chosen "pope"—the title of the bishops of Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria—of Carthage, "by the voice of the people and the verdict of God", but against the wishes of a small group of elderly and eminent presbyters, including a certain Novatus;¹ these men were to give Cyprian much anxiety.

He had not been in office a year when the Decian persecution broke out,² and made an immediate attack on the bishops of the chief cities. Cyprian was successful in finding a safe place of refuge which afforded him protection during the entire persecution. His absence, however, did not prevent his maintaining charge of the Church, and giving by letter the more critical directives; he also received visitors and, in a certain Tertullus, had a confidential friend who kept him in touch with everything important. The presbyters and deacons conducting the oversight of the Roman church in place of bishop Fabian, who had died in a glorious manner, sent news of the martyrdom to Carthage, and, at the same time, wrote a letter which clearly expressed their surprise at the flight of the Carthaginian

¹ Cypr., *ep.*, 43, I. 3. 4. 14, I. 52, 2; cf. 59, 6

² *Supra*, pp. 166–70

shepherd of souls. Cyprian felt the letter to be so insulting that he sent it back, and asked whether it was genuine.¹

He gave them, too, a detailed account of his activities, sent, as proof, his letters addressed to the church at Carthage, and explained that he only kept himself in hiding because his presence in Carthage served to provoke the authorities, and would have aggravated the persecutions.² He had consigned the care of the churches to his clergy but had not omitted to advise even them to be cautious and to avoid drawing attention to themselves.³ In particular he had exercised concern for strengthening the imprisoned, wrote them frequent encouraging and admonitory letters, and sent them money from his own pocket. It follows from all this, that the explicit and official confiscations, consequent on his flight, had not robbed him of all his property.⁴ The bishop, however, was not as yet so intimate with his flock that his authority was fully able to act from a distance, and prevent the appearance of unhealthy symptoms; and, in his place of hiding, he was troubled by ominous visions, seen in dreams, of disharmony and splits in the Church.⁵

The question which had given the Romans concern, and which they had touched upon in their letter, soon required an answer also in Carthage: What was to be done with the backsliders (*lapsi*)? They were far too many simply to be written off as lost, in accordance with the stern practice of the early Church; the Church must exercise its cure of souls upon them and proffer them some sort of hope. But what sort? The Roman letter, mentioned above, only stated in general terms⁶ how to bring backsliders to remorse and repentance in order that they be not lost, but forgiven by God: perhaps they would then have courage, if arrested again, to make a brave confession. If however they fell ill, communion was to be administered to them. Cyprian also adopted this standpoint, and gave it more precise expression: pastoral care was to be given to the *lapsi* while persecution was still in progress, although he strictly forbade coming to any decision about receiving them back into the fellowship of the Church. Any man

¹ Cypr., *ep.*, 9,2. Similarly Jer., *ep.*, 102
³ *Ibid.* 5. 7. 14,2

⁴ *Ibid.* 7; cf. 66,4

² Cypr., *ep.*, 8,9. 20,1 f.; cf. 7. 14,1
⁵ *Ibid.* 11,3 f.

⁶ *Ibid.* 8,2 f.

who urged that he should be received back, had the opportunity every day of appearing before the rulers of the state and becoming a martyr; in this way he could reverse his backsliding. As soon as peace was restored, a synod of bishops and other clerics, including also confessors and trustworthy laymen, were to lay down the fundamental principles and to judge the different cases according to their varied seriousness.¹ Only in a case of impending death was communion to be granted to one seriously ill, and that on the recommendation of a martyr or confessor.²

This prescription of Cyprian's was quite clear, but did not find general acceptance: opposition came from two sides. In the first place, the confessors who were suffering in prison, claimed it as their valid and ancient right, by virtue of the spirit operating in them, to send letters of recommendation (*libelli pacis*) on behalf of the backsliders. They claimed the highest authority for the *libelli*, and they desired that the bishop and his clergy should again accept into the fellowship of the Church those who were mentioned in such a writing, that they should accept them at once, and in particular without public repentance or other recantation. There was also a further point. Granted that they were in a state of war with the authorities, the confessors were by no means in other respects praiseworthy examples of the Christian life, and, when they were permitted to leave prison, many of them evilly misused their newly-won freedom. Moreover, they sometimes wrote *libelli* without a careful examination of the particular case, which was, perhaps, not even guaranteed by personal acquaintance; sometimes, indeed, the *libelli* were issued in the form of a blank cheque.³

When now Cyprian politely but firmly repudiated these presumptuous and irrelevant cases, his old opponents in the college of presbyters perceived an opportunity of undermining his episcopal authority, and acceded to the request of the confessors in full: they agreed that all backsliders should be admitted to communion if the latter brought a letter of recommendation of this kind; nor should the backsliders be subjected

¹ Cypr., *ep.*, 17,3. 19,2. 20,3. 30,5. 31,6. 43,3
³ *Ibid.* 13,4 f. 14,3. 15,3 f.; *de unit.* 20. *de laps.* 20

² *Ibid.* 18. 19. 20,3

to further examination, or required to show their repentance in public; and they urged the bishop to approve the action.¹ But he stood his ground, and thereby provoked the confessors to repeated acts of presumption: in the end the latter granted a general pardon to all the backsliders who came within Cyprian's jurisdiction, and requested the bishop to provide an official notification of the facts to all his fellow-bishops.² Cyprian quietly set aside all monstrous demands of this character. His action inflamed the passion of his opponents. His fundamentally cautious attitude, and his requirement of examination in individual cases, were explained as contempt for the honour of the confessors—which was indeed the case—and, in a few cities of the province, the excited multitude compelled their bishops to accept the backsliders.³ Cyprian remained throughout in constant touch with the college of presbyters at Rome, continued to give information about his regulations and written pronouncements, and found in the agreement of the Roman church a valuable defence at his back.⁴

After being set free from prison, a great number of the Carthaginian confessors left the country and fled to Rome: relations were opened with the Roman brethren who pined in prison there.⁵ These were unwilling to agree to the extreme desires of the Carthaginians, but held firm to the leadership of their home church. In this sense also, they wrote letters and uttered warnings to Africa, receiving in return a warm letter of thanks from Cyprian, to which in turn they responded heartily.⁶ In Carthage, however, all restraint was abandoned. The antagonistic presbyters had already dispensed themselves of obedience to Cyprian, to such an extent that Novatus, their leader, appointed as deacon a highly respected person, Felicissimus by name, and thus the control of the relief funds of the Church passed into his hands. Cyprian's directions for dispensing the money were no longer respected, and indeed, notice to terminate fellowship with him was given in so many words, and in the hearing of the Church. Anyone who now desired monetary help had to join those who were against the bishop—and many followed this line.⁷ That was the situation

¹ *ep.* 14.4. 15.1. 16.1–3. 17.2
⁴ *Ibid.* 27. 30. 35

² *Ibid.* 23; cf. 22.2. 27.2

⁵ *Ibid.* 21.22

⁶ *Ibid.* 30.4. 28.31

³ *Ibid.* 27.1–3

⁷ *Ibid.* 41. 42. 43. 52.2

in the Church in the spring of A.D. 251;¹ and when Cyprian returned after Easter (March 23), although he had solemnly excommunicated Felicissimus and his adherents, he nevertheless found them maintaining their place, and in firm opposition to himself.

In order to clarify the situation, Cyprian published two writings outlining his proposals.² The first dealt with the back-sliders, and explained in detail his view of the varied character of the cases. The most blameworthy were those who had made the sacrifices without outer compulsion, in order, if at all possible, to preserve their house and property from confiscation. To receive these back lightly would be a sin against the clear prescription of the gospel, and no genuine martyr would come forward and guarantee such a person. Those who had recanted voluntarily in this fashion, must bear the consequences of their falling away: only God Himself could forgive them. The case was different with those the strength of whose will had been broken by the severity of their sufferings as martyrs: they would be met with sympathy, and no very long period of penitence would be required of them. But backsliders were also to be found among the *libellatichi* who had used bribery in order to purchase a certificate of sacrifice without having actually sacrificed. Such persons had submitted to orders promulgated by the state, and hostile to Christians; they had indirectly denied Christ; hence they also must do penance. Really, of course, any who had seriously entertained the idea of sacrificing, ought to do penance.³ This was the first time that Cyprian explicitly declared that he did not intend to receive back any apostates in the full sense of the word: they were to remain all their lives in the status of repentance. The question of admission to the Church only arose in the case of less serious sinners. Thus, in practice, he refused to recognize any validity in the letters of reconciliation granted by the confessors.

His second writing dealt with *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, and discussed with great penetration every form of separation and schism. In the course of his argument, he coined the

¹ Date: *ep. 43,1. 4. 7* (p. 591,6. 593,4. 596,21 Hartel)

² H. Koch, *Cypr. Untersuchungen* (*Arb. z. Kirchengesch.* no. 4, 1926), 79–131

³ *de lapsis* 17. 13. 27 (*ep. 30,3*). 28

classical phrase, which has since echoed throughout the centuries: "It is impossible to have God as Father without having the Church as mother." Outside the Church there was no life, no salvation. Moreover the Church was a unity, and this unity was expressed in the episcopacy, and this again had sprung from a single, apostolic root. Whoever separated himself from the bishop, separated himself from the Church, and, as a consequence, from truth and salvation. All this was impossible for a genuine Christian. The principle held good for everyone, including martyrs and confessors, who themselves were not beyond being tempted by the devil, and who had only reached a stage in, and not the final end of, salvation: even among these persons, there were regrettable cases of backsliding. Schism in the Church was an even greater sin than denial, since it negated the unity of the Church which a repentant backslider recognized.¹

These two writings clearly indicate Cyprian's place in the history of the Church. He decidedly extended the line which had previously been drawn by Ignatius: the Church and the authority of the Monarchical bishop were identical, and all claims of persons of charismatic eminence, i.e. in this case the martyrs and confessors, were repudiated *in toto* by Cyprian; and so, too, the claim to independence advanced by the members of the college of presbyters. No politeness in form² could, or should, deceive us in regard to the fact that Cyprian did not look on the presbyters as colleagues, but as subordinates.

The synod which had frequently been projected was now held, probably in May, A.D. 251: not indeed as an assembly of clerics, confessors, and laymen, as hitherto had always been proclaimed, but as a normal council of the African bishops,³ and, after a penetrating discussion of the question of backsliders, it confirmed the principles laid down by Cyprian. The synod also supported Cyprian's action in excluding Felicissimus and the antagonistic presbyters; and when a Roman synod⁴ supported the Carthaginian resolutions, Cyprian might say that he had accomplished everything that was possible at the

¹ *de unitate* 4-6. 9. 19-21; cf. *ep.* 73,21. 74,7 ² *ep.* 38,1 is instructive on this point
³ Record in *ep.* 55,6. 17-23. 59,9 ⁴ *ep.* 55,6. Eus., *H.E.*, 6,43,3 f.

moment. This certainly included a considerable strengthening of his authority, but it did not bring peace. In the next year, the opposition attempted an attack, in the first place at the synod of May 15, A.D. 252; however this was promptly nipped in the bud, whereupon Fortunatus the presbyter was chosen as opposition bishop. The split in the Church—the “schism”—was complete. There were even bishops who recognized Fortunatus—their number being given as twenty-five although the figure was vigorously disputed by Cyprian—and, in Carthage, the Church of the schismatic bishops was supported by the elderly presbyters.

Fortunatus now sent a delegation to Rome in order to win the recognition of bishop Cornelius.¹ After more than a year's interregnum, the latter had been elected in March A.D. 251.² In this case also, the voting was not unanimous, and soon an opposition bishop was instituted in the person of Novatian, hitherto the leader of the college of presbyters.³ Cyprian kept silence in the first instance, prevented a hasty recognition of Cornelius,⁴ and, only after having received more exact accounts, began to associate with him, and acknowledge his status as bishop by transmitting to him the resolutions of the council.⁵ Cornelius was not greatly pleased with this caution, and expressed himself clearly to that effect: hence it did not appear useless to Fortunatus to seek to be recognized by Cornelius. In the middle of A.D. 252, he sent Felicissimus, with other friends, as his agent to Rome. Thereupon Cornelius, who at first had set great value on friendship with Cyprian, became uncertain. Meanwhile, the messengers from Carthage hinted that, if their wishes were denied, they would make certain scandals public. Cyprian then became seriously angry, and wrote Cornelius a letter⁶ which dealt in detail with all the relevant points. But at the beginning he made it clear to his junior colleague that all was over with the dignity of the episcopal office if he let himself be cowed by threats: a bishop must be able to tolerate abuse; all the aggrieved had already been condemned by the appropriate judges in Carthage, and

¹ *ep.* 59, 10 f. 14–19

² Harnack, *Chronologie*, 2, 351

³ Cyprian, *ep.*, 55, 5 (p. 627, 7 Hartel)

⁴ *ep.* 44, 1. 45, 3. 48. H. Koch, *op. cit.*, 117–31

⁵ *ep.* 48, 3. 55, 6

⁶ *Ibid.* 59; cf. par. 2. 3. 14

they had no business to be in Rome. The tone of this lecture to his "dear brother" shows what Cyprian thought about him. But it was effective.

About the same time, representatives of Novatian agitated in Carthage for his recognition by the church there. The first delegation appeared soon after the divisive election made in Rome in A.D. 251, but did not meet with a good reception by Cyprian and his synod.¹ Nevertheless, a movement took place in the province to grant recognition to Novatian, whose rigorism, which excluded all the backsliders from repentance, necessarily found support among the elderly Montanists. In any case, a meeting was at last brought together in Carthage which honoured Novatian as the rightful Roman bishop, and welcomed his delegate, the presbyter Maximus, whom he had instituted as bishop.² The result was that Carthage now had three bishops: the "lenient" Fortunatus, the "strict" Maximus, and the "catholic" Cyprian. Cyprian's old enemy, Novatus, played a part in these changes; it was he who persuaded a number of confessors in Rome temporarily to Novatian's side, and, in the late summer of A.D. 251, headed a new delegation of Novatian's adherents when they were sent to Carthage.³ We have no exact information as to the events, because Cyprian speaks only contemptuously about them, and records the continual crumbling of the hostile front.⁴ It is clear, however, that he regarded it as necessary to send Cornelius a list of the names of all the African bishops in order that he might know with whom he might associate.⁵ We cannot discern the attitude of the opposite side. It is impossible to say how many bishops actually opposed Cyprian, and, equally impossible, how far these contending factions had penetrated among the people. There can be no doubt that much personal passion was manifested, but there was certainly also considerable spiritual anxiety and inward distress, accompanied by much religious eccentricity and fanaticism. Taken all together, these facts undermined the unity of the African church more seriously than Cyprian's letters really indicate. All the disputes which had taken place since the days of Montanism show us that, in this region, the opposing elements increased in passion, and

¹ *ep.* 44

² *ep.* 44,3. 55,24. 59,9

³ *ep.* 50. 52,2

⁴ *ep.* 59,15

⁵ *ep.* 59,9

went from bad to worse; this led to an inner unrest which resulted in Donatism in the fourth century.

In the meantime, it must be granted that Cyprian showed masterly skill in confirming his own position. He had secured recognition for his own fundamental principles: those who had voluntarily recanted were excluded for life. Then in the spring of A.D. 253, there appeared the first heralds of a persecution newly planned by the emperor Gallus; and the council held in May immediately interpreted the signs of the times.¹ The stern decision of life-long exclusion was rescinded, and all backsliders who had submitted to the censure of the Church were assured of reception, this plan being adopted in order to strengthen them for the impending struggle. In this way the practical question at issue with the Fortunatus party was obviated at the vital point. The danger passed Africa by—in Rome, Cornelius was banished²—but a way had been found of dealing with backsliders, and the struggle had resulted in advantage to the Church.

As regards Rome, Cyprian had had the good fortune of maintaining his authority, and, in regard to Cornelius in particular, that had not been a difficult matter. We hear nothing of any contacts with his successor, Lucius, who held office for scarcely a year. In A.D. 254, Stephen became pope of Rome; and then some remarkable discussions took place. In the Spanish towns of Leon (in Asturia) and Merida (in Estremadura), the bishops had been deposed as *libellatici*, and their successors had been chosen in accordance with all the rules. Suddenly one of the deposed bishops appeared in Rome, swore the innocence of himself and his colleagues before Stephen, and was told that he ought to be reinstated into his office. Thereupon the two successors in Spain set out with all the necessary records, not to Rome but to Carthage, and received attestation of the legality of their position from Cyprian and his council. In regard to the verdict in Rome, the attestation, issued by the synod, only said incidentally that Stephen had not been informed of the true circumstances, and hence had been deceived; this however was not his fault, but that of the cunning deceivers. The synod reached their verdict

¹ *ep.* 57

² *Supra*, p. 170

on the principle accepted by the whole world, and, in particular, also by Cornelius, that a backsliding cleric, after due repentance, might be received again as a layman, but could never reassume a position among the clergy.¹

In another matter, the convictions of Cyprian the Carthaginian pope, came even more strongly to the light of day. Faustinus, bishop of Lyons, acting in the name of the bishops of Gaul, had turned to Rome and Carthage in a difficulty concerning Marcianus of Arles, who, as a strict disciple of Novatian, was unwilling to offer backsliders any prospect of being received again. Stephen had not answered, and Faustinus wrote Cyprian for a second time. Thereupon the latter sat down and wrote very privately to his colleague in Rome as to the reply he should send to Lyons. Marcianus ought to be deposed and a successor chosen—and Cyprian asked Stephen to be so kind as to suggest a name to Carthage.² We have no information as to how the two matters ended, nor how Stephen replied to his colleague's letter: but, in reference to a third question, we possess definite particulars on both points.

The return of followers of Novatian to fellowship in the church catholic after they had repented raised the question everywhere whether baptism administered in that schismatic Church ought to be recognized or not. The traditional practice of the Church was logical: it refused recognition, and required the re-baptism of those who came back. In the present circumstances, however, much was to be said for recognizing Novatian's baptism: the difference between the two churches was only in outer matters, and had nothing to do with differences of doctrine. The question was laid before Cyprian by one of his bishops, and he refused without hesitation. He had always branded the followers of Novatian, together with other opponents, as outside the pale of the Church, and had conducted the struggle against them from this standpoint. What he had so firmly maintained before, gave a lead in the present situation, viz. outside the Church there was no salvation, and therefore also no sacraments. It was a fundamental impossibility to recognize the baptism of outsiders.³ A few Numidian bishops were in doubt: Cyprian consequently caused

¹ *ep.* 67,5 f.

² *ep.* 68

³ *ep.* 69

this principle to be solemnly reiterated at a council in A.D. 255.¹ He described it as altogether incomprehensible that any colleague should have judged otherwise.² Since the most important of these incomprehensible persons occupied the episcopal chair in Rome, the council wrote to Stephen and informed him of its conclusions³ "in the expectation that, as a genuinely religious and truth-loving man, he would agree with what was both devout and true. As to the rest, it was not intended to exercise constraint on, or issue prescriptions for, anybody, since, in the leadership of the Church, each bishop was free to reach his own decision, and was under obligation to give an account of his conduct of affairs only to God."

Stephen's answer was given in unexpectedly sharp tones: he advised the African bishops not to introduce novelties against tradition, and not to re-baptize returning heretics, because the baptism administered by the church catholic was recognized by the other side.⁴ That was an open declaration of war, and Cyprian responded with his strongest weapon. On September 1, A.D. 256, he assembled a special synod in Carthage, attended by eighty-seven bishops. In the introductory speech, he referred only to his correspondence with an African colleague, and requested the members of the synod to express their opinion in regard to the question of baptizing heretics, "without thereby expressing a verdict about others who thought differently, and without intending to exclude them from their fellowship. Because none of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or exercises the terrors of a tyrant in order to bring his colleagues to compulsory obedience." It was perfectly clear to whom he was referring even if no name was mentioned, and no letter read aloud. The official minutes of this synod have been preserved.⁵ It is very impressive to note here how one bishop after another gives a shorter or longer reason for his opinion and pronounces in favour of Cyprian, and how the latter finally closes the subject; there is no doubt that the entire action had been carefully prepared down to the smallest detail.

Meanwhile, as far as Stephen was concerned, the matter

¹ *ep. 70*

² *ep. 71,1*

³ *ep. 72,3*

⁴ *ep. 74,1*

⁵ *Sententiae episcoporum 87. de haer. bapt. 1,435–461* Hartel; von Soden, *Gött. nachr.*, 1909, 247–307

had become a question of the authority of Rome. He therefore decided to break off church-fellowship with all those who held different opinions from his own. The African delegates, who were to carry to him the conclusions reached by the council, were not only not received but were left without lodgings: they were to feel in their own persons what it meant to be excommunicated from Rome. Moreover, in accordance with 2 Cor. 11: 13, Stephen vilified Cyprian as a pseudo-Christian, a pseudo-prophet, and a deceitful worker. Unfortunately, the churches of Asia Minor came under this pronouncement, and the Cappadocian bishop, Firmilian of Cæsarea, wrote Cyprian an indignant letter about this presumption of Stephen's.¹ We shall have to discuss in another connection the doctrinal disputes about the authority of Rome which flared up as a consequence. It is sufficient for the moment to point out that all who took part remained in battle array, and that Dionysios, bishop of Alexandria, vainly attempted to act as mediator.²

Secular politics now began to play a part, and they effected a solution. The Emperor Valerian promulgated an edict against the Christians,³ and Stephen died as a martyr on August 2, A.D. 256. Dionysios took the dispute up again with Xystus, his successor, that peace might be made;⁴ and he was right in expecting success, for Xystus was not obliged personally to maintain the position of his predecessor Stephen. However, further details are unknown. On August 6, A.D. 258, Xystus was slain in a catacomb. Cyprian regarded the event as a sign of the coming storm and informed the African bishops accordingly, but without using any affectionate tone suggesting fraternal peace. Then he himself died, not unexpectedly; for years his letters had spoken of "these latter days", whose distresses had been prophesied in the Bible. He expected his end.

On August 30, A.D. 257, he was banished by the pro-consul, Paternus, to Curubis (now Kurba). A short time afterwards, he was permitted to return on condition that he remained always in his garden-villa in the suburbs. He complied, until he heard that the newly arrived pro-consul, Galerius Maximus,

¹ *eb.* 75,25. Eus., *H.E.*, 7,5,4
³ *Supra*, p. 170

² Eus., *H.E.*, 7,4. 5,5
⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 7,5,4-6

wished to try his case in Utica. Thereupon he went into hiding again, because he wished to die, not in Utica, but near his church in Carthage: the wonderful letter in which he took leave of his clergy¹ expresses that desire in quite simple and moving terms. As expected, the pro-consul returned to Carthage and caused the obstinate pope, Cyprian, to be arrested by two officers, and brought to a suburb. The entire church streamed out there, and waited at the gate throughout the night. On the next day, September 14, A.D. 258, the case was brought forward and after a brief hearing ended with the sentence of death. "And we wish to die with him," cried the people, and preceded him to the place of execution. There on an open piece of ground, Cyprian laid aside his mantle, knelt down, and prayed. Then he took off his upper garment, the white sleeved dalmatica, and stood only in a linen shirt awaiting the executioner. When the latter arrived, he ordered him to be given twenty-five pieces of gold, while those who stood round threw linen cloths and handkerchiefs in front of him in order to receive the precious blood. Two clerics blindfolded his eyes—then his head fell. The body was carried away, and watch was kept with candles and torches during the night.² The pope of Africa had become a martyr.

¹ *ep. 81*

² *Acta St. Cypriani*; cf. Reitzenstein, *d. Nachr. über d. Tod. Cyprians*, Heidelb. S. Ber. 1913, no. 14

Chapter Eleven

ROME

DURING THE SECOND CENTURY THE CAPITAL OF THE EMPIRE reflected the prosperity of the broad imperium in magnificent buildings erected at the reigning emperor's will; even at the beginning of the third century, in spite of all the dangers and all the economic crises, no diminution was to be observed in the building activities of the city of Rome. The immense forum of Trajan, Hadrian's temple of Venus and Roma, the palace of Septimius Severus on the Palatine, the Thermae of Caracalla, still survive as impressive testimonies to the facts. Although literature was drying up, the plastic arts enjoyed thousands of commissions and maintained their own vitality even if, to a large extent, the result was only pedestrian in character, and on coarse lines. The population continued to be a varied mixture drawn from all the provinces of the Empire, but even in the Antonine period it did not increase in numbers. The continuous fall in the birthrate, the years of epidemic, and, what was in the end of the greatest consequence, the cessation of immigration from the provinces, caused the population of the city to fall ever more rapidly during the second half of the century: c. A.D. 150 it stood at one million, two hundred and fifty thousand; about A.D. 200 it may be estimated at one million, and c. A.D. 300 at half a million.¹ Nevertheless, Rome still remained a city of magnificence and luxury, in which the social problem, e.g. that of satisfying the propertyless masses, was solved by distributing bread and providing circuses. Moreover, about the same period, Christianity grew up in Rome from inconspicuous beginnings to be of dominating power.

We have already had occasion to bewail the poverty of our knowledge in regard to the early stages of this Church. We could only infer, on the basis of its own documentary and other remains, that it originated from the missionary activity of converted Hellenistic Jews.² Attention has been drawn to the

¹ Kahrstedt in Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*, 10th edit., 4, 21 ² Vol. 1, pp. 191, 199

supposed parallels among the Jews in Rome, and scholars have tried to make valid deductions from this source: but in vain. Under Augustus, the Jews had their quarter in Trastevere. Shortly afterwards, they also lived in other regions of the city according as it suited newcomers, or if they formed part of a larger group of slaves, that fact would have settled where they lived. Inscriptions in the Jewish catacombs show us that there were communities in the Subura and on the Campus Martius. In addition to these, mention is made of eleven other Jewish communities, including four described as groups of slaves in eminent families. The graves belonging to these communities are to be found, in an arrangement which can only be understood with difficulty, in a number of cemeteries outside the city. We hear nothing of any organized community of the Jews in Rome.¹

On the other hand, the Christian community there was a unity from the beginning. This assertion may appear self-apparent in regard to the earliest period of all, but soon, on account of the same reasons as were operative amongst the Jews, the Christians were separated in different groups throughout the city: the case was similar in the great oriental cities of Antioch and Ephesus. Everywhere, "house-churches" were constituted among such groups, and were composed of those who had a common dwelling or occupation: even in Jerusalem that was the case.² But these small circles were never independent units, but always parts of the church universal in that locality: and their unity was seen in the fact that they were all under the leadership of one college of presbyters or bishops, and the unity was the more obvious when all the groups came under the leadership of a monarchic bishop. This development was lacking in Judaism: it was the consequence of the Christian conception of the Church, a conception which grew as a result of continual striving for visible unity, even in outer forms. Rome was suited for combining all these features into one: but it required centuries in order to reach its goal.

In Rome, the change from collegiate to monarchical leadership of the Church was completed by the middle of the second

¹ Frey in *Recherches de science religieuse* 20 (1930), 295 ff. 21 (1931), 165 f.

² Acts 2: 46

century:¹ a time when, after severe crises had been overcome, the principles of early catholicism as founded on the apostolic tradition had triumphed. Marcion had come to Rome, but, c. A.D. 140, the Church had managed to exclude him. Twenty years later, Valentine the gnostic laboured in the city, and in the end was compelled to depart without having met with better success.² About this time, the Apologist Justin was the Church's theologian, and he wrote against the heretics;³ his work has not survived, but churchmen in the succeeding period frequently copied it out.

Soon after A.D. 150, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome, and came to an understanding with Bishop Anicetus in regard to Church problems. But he was not successful in convincing the Romans of the necessity of celebrating the Passover as was customary in Asia Minor. Anicetus pointed out that his predecessors had never observed the festival, and he was unwilling to depart from this tradition. However, Rome was tolerant: Christians from Asia Minor, temporarily or permanently staying in Rome, might always observe their Passover undisturbed, and would nevertheless be recognized as members of the Roman communion: and this in spite of the fact that their rite could have been branded and definitely repudiated as Jewish in character. It follows that the difference in worship on this point had given rise to no hostility between Anicetus and Polycarp, and the Roman bishop had permitted his respected guest to officiate in his place when the Eucharist was celebrated.⁴ We must note, nevertheless, that the celebration of Easter continued to spread in the Church, and Anicetus's successor, Soter, introduced it even into Rome; not however in the form usual in Asia Minor, but in that practised in the majority of cases, as a Sunday festival of the Resurrection.⁵

About twenty years later, a conflict arose on this issue when a certain Blastus, who is now otherwise unknown, began to work in Rome on behalf of the "quartodecimanian", i.e. Asia Minor, Passover rite, and to defend it on Biblical grounds;⁶ for internal

¹ *Supra*, pp. 60 f. ² Vol. I, pp. 249, 287

³ Justin, *apol.*, 26,8. Iren. 4,6,2; cf. 5,26,2

⁴ *Supra*, p. 133. Iren. in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,14-17

⁵ *Supra*, pp. 134 f. ⁶ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,15.Ps. Tert., *adv. omnes. haer.*, 8 (Hippolytus ap. *Chron. pasch.* pp. 12,21-13,7); E.T. in *Ante N. Chr. Lib.*, Vol. IX. 2, p. 94

reasons it is entirely probable that he was the spokesman of a group of Christians from Asia Minor resident in the city.¹ In any case, Victor, bishop of Rome, wished to settle the problem. He called a synod together in Rome and requested also all other church centres to call similar synods to end the question.² We have already shown³ that all the others adopted the Roman practice, and that only Asia Minor, led by Polycrates of Ephesus, held firmly to its old view: this caused Victor to break with that church, an action which was universally disapproved.

It could not be said on formal grounds that Victor had gained the day, but, on material grounds, his action was of the greatest significance. For the first time, the unity of the church catholic had been exhibited in a number of decisions reached by different synods, which agreed with what the Roman Church had declared the right course. Whether on this occasion Victor had referred to his own apostolic tradition is not clear in the paucity of our sources: the representatives of Palestine made reference to, and those of Asia Minor adduced, the testimony of their own Apostles.⁴ In any case, it was incontestable that Rome had raised, and taken the lead in, the whole matter, and that Rome had been judged in the right. That was a gain for the future. About this period the Church lived in a fair degree of peace with the state. Marcia, the favourite of the Emperor Commodus, was a Christian, and was even able to liberate condemned fellow-believers from the quarries of Sardinia.⁵ Nevertheless there was much disquietude in the Church.

Blastus was not the only one who caused difficulty to Bishop Victor. Eusebius mentions, side by side with him, a presbyter, Florinus, who held gnostic views, not very different from Valentinism: Irenaeus frequently wrote against him.⁶ In addition there were the theologians of Asia Minor whom we have already mentioned; they found response in, and were possibly supported by the same communities as had favoured Blastus. Theodosius the "dynamist" was excommunicated by Victor,

¹ La Piana, *Harv. Theol. Rev.*, 1925, 218

² Polycrates in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,24,8

³ *Supra*, pp. 135 f.

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,25. 5,24,2 f.

⁵ Hipp., *Refut.*, 9,12,11

⁶ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,15. 20,1. Iren., *fragm. syr.*, 28 (2,457). Baumstark, *ZNW.*, 1912, 306 ff.

but he had a following, and his disciples formed a church of their own under a certain bishop Natalis who submitted again, however, to Zephyrinus, Victor's successor.¹ If we take various facts into account, viz., that even under Eleutherios, Victor's predecessor, Montanism had been favourably judged in Rome, and that it was only the influence of Praxeas which occasioned a change in the bishop's attitude;² that at a later date, and similarly to Praxeas, Noëtos of Smyrna had preached "Monarchian" theology to the Romans;³ then it will become clear that the strong influence coming from Asia Minor might occasion anxiety, and that, in a certain sense, the life of the Church was faced with a "problem of Asia Minor" which was significant enough to explain the firmness of Victor's action in regard to Easter.

In any case, it was the Church of Asia Minor which provoked a theological movement in the Roman Church. Justin had stood for a logos Christology, Theodosius taught Adoptionism, Noëtos and Praxeas were Monarchians; these inconsistencies roused the Church, and eventually compelled the bishop to attempt a settlement. His first action was purely negative: Theodosius's excommunication, already mentioned. We have no information as to the grounds, and it is probable that there was no discussion of the actual problem, but that the reasons were confined to branding as blasphemous the language which declared that Jesus was "a mere man".⁴ Hence we remain uncertain whether Theodosius had used this very terminology, or whether these words were placed on his lips as a deduction from his teaching: there are plenty of analogies in the theological disputes of a later period.

The Monarchical doctrine of Noëtos and his disciple, Cleomenes, appeared unexceptionable for a long time, and was regarded as an appropriate expression of the religious feelings of the Church, until the representatives of the logos theology began to announce their claims. The head of this group in Rome was the learned presbyter, Hippolytus, whereas the opposite side gained a new and important protagonist in Sabellius of Libya.⁵ Finally, Zephyrinus decided to put an end to the

¹ Hipp. in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,28,68–12

² Tert., *adv. Prax.*, 1; cf. Eus., *H.E.*, 5,1,2. 3,4

³ *Supra*, p. 190

⁴ Hipp. in Eus., *H.E.*, 5,28,6; cf. *Refut.* 10,23,1

⁵ Caspari, *Quellen*, 3,326

dispute. He promulgated an official declaration:¹ "I know only one God, Christ Jesus, and no other in addition to Him; He was born and He suffered." This accorded with the naïve modalism of the Church's faith, a modalism which consciously avoided the theological phraseology of Noëtos or Sabellios, and inevitably appeared unsatisfactory to Hippolytus: the latter raised objections, and consequently had to suffer reproaches as a ditheist, the charges not being entirely without reason.²

The contest spread further, and, when Callistus became bishop after the death of Zephyrinus, a division broke out in the Church.³ We do not know what provided the occasion, but the outcome is clear enough. Callistus excommunicated Sabellios on grounds of heresy, and published a theological statement which accepted the conception of the logos repudiated by the Monarchians, and which made the logos equal with God who was Spirit; the Spirit was called Father and had united himself in the Son with human nature. Of course this theological compromise also met with no sympathy. Indeed war was now declared on Sabellios, and even Hippolytus remained unappeased, but it is still unknown whether he had already declared himself to have broken with Callistus, or whether he only now said farewell in company with Sabellios. What is certain is that he did it in connection with the present affair. Acting together with those whom he regarded as orthodox, Hippolytus separated himself from the "heretic" Callistus, and himself became their bishop.⁴ He dealt with Callistus and his adherents as schismatic heretics, and expressed contempt for their claim to belong to the church catholic; nevertheless he had to admit that they were in the majority.⁵

Naturally, Hippolytus did not regard either Zephyrinus or Callistus as opponents equal to himself: both were practical men, and neither had the mind for Greek speculations, which they must have regarded as a purposeless logomachy that endangered unity. Hippolytus declared the first to be intellectually of little consequence; and the second, with whom he quarrelled violently, he called morally shallow. In his

¹ Hipp., *Refut.*, 9, 11, 3. Harnack, *Sitz. Akad. Berl.*, 1923, 51–57

² Hipp., *ibid.*, 9, 11, 3, 12, 16; cf. *supra*, pp. 237 and 252 f. ³ Hipp., *ibid.*, 9, 12, 15–18

⁴ K. Müller, *ZNW*, 1924, 234

⁵ Hipp., *ibid.*, 9, 12, 19–21. 25; cf. *praef.* 6

book about the heresies, he deals with these disputes in the city of Rome,¹ and gives a sketch of Callistus, a sketch which describes him as having originally been a slave, and which is otherwise extremely startling. Bankruptcy, attempted suicide, brawling in a Jewish service of worship, condemnation to compulsory labour in a quarry, liberation by patronage in high quarters, these were the principal events of his life before becoming a cleric. Then he had been made a deacon by Zephyrinus, and, by clever use of his bishop's weaknesses, he had attained power and become his successor. In the leading position which he had been lucky enough to reach, he had ruined the Roman Church theologically and morally. There is no doubt that personal hatred lent gall to Hippolytus's pen, and that justice would pronounce a very different verdict on Callistus.

Hippolytus lived in another world than that of his enemy. Though influenced by Irenaeus, he was more in sympathy with the Greek manner of thought; he continued the line begun by Justin. That is seen most plainly in his principal work, *Refutation of all Heresies*, which is in large part extant; it is not limited to the gnostics and those of similar view, but begins with a description and criticism of ancient doctrines of the philosophers, and also deals with astrology and magic arts. The Roman dispute about Easter led him to draw up a table for calculating Easter Sundays. The real reason here was the desire to make the Church independent of the Jews in regard to these important questions of worship, and to calculate, on independent knowledge and authority, the first full moon in Spring, and the first Sunday thereafter.

Hippolytus calculated a cycle of one hundred and twelve years beginning with A.D. 222, and his is the first attempt of the sort; from a scientific point of view it is a poor performance, but it impressed his contemporaries and led to further results.² His friends held the tables in such high esteem that they engraved them, together with a list of all his writings, on the back of his statue. That such a statue should have been carved at all is as remarkable as the fact that it has survived.

His *Chronicle* was of greater influence; like the table for finding

¹ Hipp., *ibid.*, 9, 6-7. 11-12

² E. Schwartz, *Ostertafeln*, pp. 29-40

Easter, it probably depended upon Alexandrian models, and consisted of a loosely connected body of material from the Bible and scientific sources. Finally, it tried to prove that at the present time, i.e. in A.D. 234, five thousand seven hundred and thirty eight years had passed since the creation of the world;¹ hence, before the year of the world six thousand, when the expected Last Day would be reached, there still remained a considerable time. Such a discussion was in place at a time when the sufferings brought about by new persecutions caused many people to think about the end of the world. Fear and hope gave vitality to the expectation of the parousia, as in later times, and indeed in our own age. Hippolytus considered these popular ideas to be lacking in discipline, and met them with a scholarly Scriptural exegesis. As early as A.D. 204, he had calculated the course of history from the book of Daniel, putting the birth of Christ in the world year five thousand five hundred, and placing the Last Day in the year six thousand.² Similar reckonings were made in Alexandria.

Eschatology claimed Hippolytus's attention pré-eminently: for this reason he annotated the book of Daniel, and wrote a monograph on the Anti-Christ. The question of prophecy and its fulfilment dominated his theological thought, and all his explanations of Biblical books made use of allegory based on this standpoint. Much of his work is extant in fragments and translations, and constitutes some of our earliest Christian commentaries on the Bible; but the remains do not reflect a mind of the first quality, even granted that their author was held in high esteem in Rome as a scholar. Origen had attended Hippolytus's lectures,³ and the latter was permitted to dedicate to the empress mother, Julia Mamaea, a tractate on the Resurrection.⁴ Nevertheless he was a dry compiler of an unpretentious kind, with a narrow range of thought; this fact partly explains his attitude in the dispute in the Roman church. The most valuable of his literary remains is a work which scarcely offers anything of his own material, viz. his *Church Order*. Here, in the form of a series of regulations, he gives a sketch of a Christian church as it should be ideally. He wrote it in order to

¹ A. Bauer's edition pp. 196, 200 f.; cf. 360-67

³ Jerome, *Vir. Ill.*, 61; cf. Photios, *cod.*, 121

² Vol. I, p. 219

⁴ Hipp., *Werke*, cd. Achelis 1,2,251

distinguish his own views from the arbitrary ideas of Callistus, and to explain what he himself understood as Apostolic tradition.¹ He looks to the past, and on this account he is to us an important source. On the other hand, his opponent had a forward look, and grasped what the living church needed. The very points that aroused the indignation of Hippolytus show, when considered calmly, that Callistus was a capable pastor of his people.²

The Roman church at the beginning of the third century had already developed far in its contacts with the world. Montanism had not seriously damaged it, because, otherwise than in Africa, it obviously had no point of entry. The radical character of the moral strenuousness found in early Christianity had been tacitly modified as the church grew. Even Hermas had preached that forgiveness was possible for deadly sins once after baptism—although only once. Callistus now proclaimed the fundamental right of the bishop to grant forgiveness to those who had committed deadly sin (the subject was sexual sin), and to admit them again to church fellowship; naturally after having performed penitence as required by the church. Tertullian greeted this claim with shame and woe, and spoke of ill-timed indulgence towards adulterers.³ It is clear, however, that Callistus was faced with the question whether he should exercise clemency, bring the sinners back, and maintain the church's cure of souls, or whether, by acting strictly, he should drive them back into paganism. He chose the former alternative, and this became normal for the entire future, because this way alone conducted the church out of the straits of separation from the world to a conquest of the world.

Hippolytus perceived quite rightly that a fundamental question was being dealt with in this matter, and therefore he objected: but Tertullian recognized far more clearly the extent of the implications contained in the decision. He would have consigned the world to perdition, and have saved a small number of the elect; Callistus wanted to save the world, and was therefore compelled to educate it, an attitude which required compromises. The church was at the parting of the

¹ E. Schwartz, *Pseudapost. Kirchenordnungen* (*Sch. d. wiss. Ges. Strassburg* 6), p. 39

² Hipp., *Refut.*, 9,12,20–26

³ Tert., *Iudic.*, 1; cf. *supra*, pp. 222 f.

ways: she was at the point of passing from the era of the primitive church into that of the church catholic. With considerable perspicacity, Callistus was careful to see to it that the bishop was the leader. When he cited the parable of the Tares among the Wheat, and Noah's Ark, with its many different kinds of animals, in support of his argument against the ideal of the "church of the saints" as unbiblical, he thereby parted company with the primitive church, but gave new life to the evangelical conception of the Jesus who sought out sinners.

Callistus's marriage-decree is to be judged similarly. For more than one reason, it was not easy for a Christian lady of senatorial rank to find a husband of her own class. Marriage with a freedman was forbidden to her,¹ with a slave it was juristically quite impossible: and yet it was in men of these classes that she might easily meet with a fellow-believer fitted to be a life's companion. In practice, indeed not infrequently, such "marriages of conscience" actually took place: Callistus officially recognized these unions as Christian marriages.

The schismatic church of Hippolytus continued under Callistus's successors, Urbanus and Pontianus, but in A.D. 235 a long-expected persecution broke even on the Roman church. The Emperor Maximinus² banished the two bishops to Sardinia, the "island of death", where neither survived very long. On September 28, A.D. 235, Pontianus resigned his office in order to facilitate the choice of his successor. On November 21, Anteros was ordained. Apparently Hippolytus took no part in instituting his own successor, but made peace for himself and his church with the other section. Pope Fabian brought the bodies of "Bishop" Pontianus and Hippolytus and buried them in Rome, the latter having been again recognized as "presbyter". The church treasured the memory of both, and revered them as martyrs,³ but, as a writer, Hippolytus was soon quite forgotten in the west. The east made use of his writings, but, after a very short time, all knowledge of his personal doings was forgotten. About the

¹ *Corp. iur. dig.* 23,2,16 pr.

² *Supra*, p. 165

³ *Lib. pontif.* 19 (24 f. Mommsen and *Catal. Liberianus (ibid.)*) cf. also *Kl. Texte* 2, p. 4

middle of the third century, Rome abandoned its Greek tradition and became a Latin-speaking church; Hippolytus's Greek writings lost their value to it.

With the advent of Bishop Fabian, greater emphasis was suddenly laid, expressly and concretely, on the high position of the Roman bishop. Beginning from his date, an unbroken series of written evidences is at the disposal of the student. The days of enthronement are noted and solemnized, a list of popes, giving exact dates, is begun, a common vault for the deceased holders of the high office was prepared in the Church's burying place in the catacomb of Callistus, the first to find a resting place here being Pontianus the martyr bishop.¹ Even in his own day Zephyrinus had taken pains with the organization of the clergy, and, in so doing, had given his deacon Callistus a position near to himself, placing under his care, about the same time, the control of the catacomb which was named after him at a later date.² As distinct from most others, which were in private hands, this burial place seems to have been the property of the church. Fabian enlarged it; but of greater significance is the fact that he took an important step in the organization of the clergy.

In the metropolis of Rome, care for the poor was, by the nature of the case, a problem which the church found as important as it was difficult. It became such an essential duty of the deacons that, in the course of time, they were deprived of the liturgical functions which were regarded as obviously theirs in other districts. Whereas in other places the number of deacons might be increased at will according to the requirements of the church, it remained in Rome at the number seven sanctified by Acts 6: 5. The college of deacons stood next to the bishop, and constituted his executive,³ and the papal throne was usually filled from one of its members. Up to this period, the activity of the deacons had not been limited according to the quarters of the city, but Fabian divided the city into seven districts, setting a deacon over each: these "regions" of the church, which, we may note in passing, in no way coincided with Augustus's fourteen regions, were maintained until

¹ *Supra*, p. 61

² Hipp., *Refut.*, 9, 12, 14

³ Cf. the directions for ordination in Hipp., *Church Order*, 33, 2-4 (2, 103 Funk)

the Middle Ages.¹ At the same time, Fabian decreed that seven additional persons should be set as adjutants alongside the seven deacons: these were called sub-deacons, and they entered the diaconate as and when places became vacant. This arrangement guaranteed that the official leadership would continue, unbroken, in the same form.

A notice² has survived from a slightly later time; it comes from pope Cornelius and deals with the constitution of the Roman clergy: it mentions one bishop, forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers—it also mentions more than fifteen hundred widows and sick as being regularly in receipt of charity. The presbyters were the real pastors of the parish which surrounded their own church. The churches frequently began in private buildings transferred to the church for purposes of public worship, later being replaced by new buildings. For centuries they were described with the name (*titulus*) of the former owner, i.e. founder, and on this account are still known as "title churches". Recent systematic excavations have left no room for doubt on this matter, although it had long been an assumption.³ Of the twenty-five title churches now known, fourteen are earlier than Constantine: hence we may assume that the majority were there in the days of Fabian and Cornelius, and therefore that two or three presbyters filled the pastoral office in one church.

Cornelius's notice, however, now goes on to give us all the "lower" clerical officers (*ordines minores*). We have already mentioned the sub-deacons. As the name signifies, the acolytes were the "followers" of the bishop, "orderlies" whom he employed for all sorts of purposes and errands.⁴ The exorcists represented what was left of the old charismatics: viz. those members of the church who possessed the gift of exorcising daemons; we may note that Tertullian ascribed this gift to every Christian.⁵ The readers were skilled in the difficult art

¹ *Lib. pontif.* 21 according to *Catal. liber.* (p. 27 Mommsen). Graffunder, "Regiones" in *Pauly-W.*, 2nd series, 1,485 f. Harnack, *Mission*, 2,836-866

² Bishop Cornelius in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,43,¹¹

³ J.P. Kirsch, *D. Röm. Titelkirchen*, 1918. E. Junyent, *Il titolo di s. Clemente in Roma*, 1932

⁴ Cyprian, *epist.*, 7 (p. 485,13). 45,4 (p. 603,15). 49,3 (p. 612,6). 52,1 (p. 616,8). 59,9 (p. 677,7). 77,3 (p. 835,20). 78,1 (p. 836,14).

⁵ *Supra*, p. 222

of using a melodious voice and the correct rhythm in reading passages aloud from the Biblical codices, which, at that time, were written without spaces between the words and without punctuation marks. The *ostiarii* or doorkeepers were the caretakers of the places of worship and other church buildings. These lower orders had similar names in Carthage about the same time, a fact which once more proves, both the close relation of the two cities, and also Rome's leading status: the names appear for the first time further east only at a considerably later date.

Fabian's practical activity, which was so significant for the future, came to an end during Decius' persecution: he was one of the first to die under it on January 20, A.D. 250. His place was left unfilled because the hand of the persecutors would immediately have fallen upon the new pope; the church was conducted for the time being by the combined colleges of presbyters and deacons: both in common conducted the correspondence with Carthage which we have already described,¹ and both opened it by transmitting an account of Fabian's martyrdom. But only the deacons were entrusted with the doubtful task of judging Cyprian's attitude, and they did so in a letter which lacked polish.²

On the question of the *lapsi*, the Romans really agreed with Cyprian in holding that it was fundamentally possible to readmit to the church those who had repented. After this mild attitude had already been shown in both Rome and Africa at an earlier date towards persons guilty of sex immorality,³ the uncompromising practice of the early church being thereby abandoned, any other attitude to the *lapsi* was scarcely conceivable in the prevailing hard times. It was also agreed to prescribe a period of penance for them, and that it was the prerogative of the bishop, as distinct from the confessors, to decide about readmission. Since there was no bishop in Rome, and the bishop was absent from Carthage, it was agreed that during a period of persecution the Eucharist should only be administered in special cases of mortal illness but, as a rule,

¹ *Supra*, p. 226

² Cyp., *epist.*, 8,3 (p. 488,10 f.) and also *ep.* 9 tit. also pars. 1 and 2 (p. 489,1. 12); cf. Caspar, *Ges. d. Papsttums*, 1,62, against Harnack, *Mission*, 2,850

³ *Supra*, p. 247, and Cyprian, *ep.*, 55,20 f.

the cases of those who repented were deferred. The co-operation between Cyprian and Rome, upon which emphasis was laid, was highly praised by the presbyter Novatian who carried on the correspondence, not without a faint echo of Rome's consciousness of superiority.¹ In contrast with their Carthaginian fellow-sufferers, the Roman confessors avoided a struggle with the regular officials of the church; they agreed with and joined in the conclusions reached by those who were leaders of the church in Rome for the time being, and with Cyprian's rules and regulations.²

In this way, the situation in the capital appeared, both inwardly and outwardly, to be altogether satisfying, when, in March, A.D. 251, it was decided³ to proceed with the deferred choosing of a bishop. The leading person in the Roman college of presbyters was Novatian. He had maintained his position in the critical year which had just passed, and was not only a skilful writer but also a learned theologian: moreover, he had the reputation of being the first Roman who possessed both these qualifications in the Latin language. In his writing⁴ *On the Trinity* he had already been more successful than Hippolytus in repudiating both the Marcionite and the Monarchian theology, in as far as he had given a bird's eye view, and had proved, by means of the Rule of Faith, the correctness of Tertullian's ideas and statements. All this agreed with western thought, and affected the following period. At the moment, it led the author to hope that he would be chosen as bishop—a position which, we may note, was both honourable and dangerous in a period of persecution. His expectation was not fulfilled: he was passed over, as had formerly been the case with the learned Hippolytus. An overwhelming majority of the clergy united in favour of the presbyter Cornelius, and he was consecrated in the presence of sixteen bishops.⁵ Novatian and five of his friends in the college of presbyters⁶ were indignant, and refused their assent.

At this point a question of principle was conjoined to the personal antagonisms, and divided the church to a large

¹ Cyp., *ep.*, 30, 1. 36, 1. 4 ² *Ibid.* 28, 31, 30, 4 ³ Harnack, *Chronologie*, 2, 351

⁴ Novatian, *de trinitate*, ed. Fausset 1909; cf. especially chaps. 29–31 and 21, 24. Jerome, *vir. int.*, 70

⁵ Cypr., *epist.*, 55, 8. 24

⁶ Cornelius in Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 43, 20

extent. It may be regarded as a natural accompaniment of such a split that all sorts of gossip made various charges against both men, and from opposite sides. The only significant accusation was that Cornelius had lightly agreed to receiving backsliders again. The defence put forward by Cyprian in one case¹ shows clearly that Cornelius had made a concession in order to win the masses; and it is probable that he had been chosen in the very expectation of such a concession. On the other hand, Novatian took the radical view, refused to recognize the lines which had hitherto been followed, and now set aside altogether the readmission of backsliders. In this way he became the leader of the strict group, which was not lacking even in Rome, and they chose him as bishop,² a course which implied refusing to recognize the lax Cornelius. In addition they were joined by the Roman confessors who had hitherto supported Cyprian and his similar policy.

The opposition was very awkward for Cornelius, and we can understand why Cyprian at first delayed recognizing this new colleague.³ However, that was soon changed. Cyprian felt that radicalism was impracticable, and the confessors soon changed over to Cornelius.⁴ The latter called a great synod in Rome which was attended by sixty bishops and many other clerics and laymen; it supported his practice in regard to confession, and excommunicated Novatian.⁵ However, the stern attitude adopted on the other side was attractive to all who were not inclined to depart from the requirements usual in the early church: and Novatian soon gained adherents under this slogan. In Africa he received more support than Cyprian is inclined to acknowledge.⁶ In the east, whole provinces of the Church came to his side, and Fabius of Antioch was already preparing a great synod which was to express itself in this sense: only his sudden death prevented that outcome. Dionysios of Alexandria fought valiantly for Cornelius and wrote letters to all parties in order to prevent a general disclaimer in the east: after considerable effort, he was eventually successful.⁷ Nevertheless,

¹ Cypr., *ep.*, 55, 11

² *Ibid.*, 44, 1. Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 43, 1 *re Cornelius, loc. cit.*, 6, 43, 7–10 ³ *Supra*, pp. 232 f.

⁴ Cypr., *ep.*, 46, 53, 54, exaggerating Cornelius in Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 43, 6; cf. 6, 46, 5

⁵ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 43, 2. Cypr., *ep.*, 55, 6

⁶ *Supra*, p. 233

⁷ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 45–6, 5, 7, 5, 1

Novatian churches were constituted in wide regions both in the west and in the east, and they were to be found alive even in the fifth century: in Constantinople at that time they had three churches of their own, in Rome still more,¹ and numerous notices tell of their continued existence in other districts.² Such a state of affairs offers a clear proof of the early operation of the law that divisions in the church, unless overcome very quickly, are intractable, and will continue to exist even when the original causes of division have lost meaning.

The letter addressed to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, in which Cornelius defends himself against Novatian,³ does not convey the happy impression that the writer possessed outstanding personal qualities—and it is comprehensible that sometimes Cyprian adopted a very arrogant attitude towards him.⁴ However, he died soon afterwards in exile ordered by Gallus, and this fact placed the halo of martyrdom around his head. He was buried in the catacomb of Callistus in a special place, outside the papal vault, and hence probably only at a later time; his epitaph is the first in Latin to be dedicated to a pope.⁵ His successor, Lucius, was eight months in office, when, in the spring of A.D. 254, Stephen was elected pope. Cyprian had no hesitation in continuing to associate with him in the same way as he had been accustomed to do with Cornelius: he felt himself to be the senior, and the more experienced of two equal colleagues. When, however, Stephen began to deal with the question of the baptism of heretics in the same way, matters came to a break which showed plainly the fundamental difference between the conceptions held by the two princes of the church about their status.

We have already discussed the subject and the course of the dispute.⁶ Stephen contested the African church's right to settle the question at its own discretion, and wrote as to how it ought to proceed. He described the re-baptism of returning heretics as an innovation contrary to tradition—which was undoubtedly incorrect in principle if one understood by tradition the

¹ Socrates 2,38,26. 7,9. 11

² Harnack in Hauck's *R.E.*, 14,241

³ In Eus., *H.E.*, 43,5–22

⁴ *Supra*, p. 233

⁵ Diehl, *Inscr. Lat.*, no 956a.

Cabrol-Leclercq, *Dict.*, 3,2969. *Catal. Liber. im.*

Lib. pont. 22 p. 28

⁶ *Supra*, pp. 235 f.

universal practice of the churches. What Stephen meant, however, was the practice of the Roman church, which practice he traced back to Peter. Moreover, since Christ had instituted Peter as the first Apostle, and had declared him to be the rock upon which he would build his church, Matt. 16: 18, his primacy must be recognized, and his tradition followed, in every quarter. But the one to exercise the Petrine authority was no other than his successor the bishop of Rome.¹ He then logically extended his claim, and declared that his verdict on the question of baptizing heretics ought to be accepted in the east; thereby he raised a violent storm of indignation.

Stephen was no more successful than Victor had formerly been in maintaining his claim. Nevertheless what he wanted was the same: on this occasion we have records of the official argument, a fact that enables us to see quite clearly the thread which continues through the centuries to the Vatican dogma of A.D. 1870. The churches of the east opposed the Roman tradition with their own, and this went back to Christ and the Apostles;² i.e. they took up the same attitude as that adopted by the churches of Asia Minor in regard to the Easter dispute. Cyprian alone opposed the Roman proof on the basis of theory, proposing one of his own in which the constitution of the early church catholic is clearly reflected. Moreover this theory of his was not first put forward in the struggle against Stephen—nor was it adapted for this purpose—but was developed in connection with his doctrine of the unity of the church; and its essential ideas had been stated as early as A.D. 251.

The church was a unity which was seen outwardly in the unanimous co-operation of the bishops: just as there was only a single church although incarnated in several individual churches, so there was only a single episcopal office embodied in its individual vehicles.³ Any bishop who separated himself from the unanimous circle of bishops, thereby separated himself from the church, because he cut himself off from the unity. This unity was regarded by Cyprian as a mystical reality brought about by the operation of the spirit: if the church were an earthly institution, the thousand bishops might have a

¹ Cypr., *ep.*, 74, I. 71, I. 71, 3. 75, 17 ² Firmilian of Caesarea in Cypr., *ep.*, 75, 19
³ Cyp r., *de eccl. unit.*, 5 (p. 214, 1-7). *ep.* 55, 24 (p. 642, 12-15)

hundred different opinions, and all be in a state of dispute with one another. It was by divine miracle that they were always unanimous, and that they always regulated variations of opinion in a friendly way. For this very reason, it was clear that a bishop who disturbed this unity had been abandoned by God, and was following the promptings of evil, i.e. he was departing from the church.

The basis of the unity lay in the fact that the bishops were the successors of the Apostles, and these constituted a single body of men with equal authority and equal rank. But there was more: Christ wished to express the unity at the root of the church quite unambiguously, and therefore, in the first instance, had called a single apostle, Peter, and had declared him to be the foundation stone of the edifice of his church. However, no legal pre-eminence had been given to Peter, but all the apostles were equal: his call was a symbol of the unity of the basis upon which the church stood, and it set forth the nature of the church through all the ages.¹ That was the reason for the similar authority of all who occupied episcopal office, an authority which was uncontested over wide regions as late as the third century; each of these bishops was a successor of the Apostles, a fact which implied a total denial of all claims for primacy, no matter from what side they might come. The rejection of the "bishop of bishops" was to them an obvious duty, and Cyprian maintained this point throughout, with complete firmness: he was not driven to the final consequences, however, before Stephen died, and he himself was martyred. But Rome's claim to primacy had been plainly foreshadowed—and we may ask, What would have happened to Cyprian's theory if once the visible unanimity of the bishops had been broken in considerable degree? The answer was provided in the fourth century.

The dispute about heretics fell into abeyance. Xystus of Rome and Cyprian of Carthage died about the same time. The Romans were again compelled to leave the episcopal chair vacant for a long time. Not until July 22, A.D. 260, was it possible to install Dionysios, hitherto a presbyter. Under

¹ Cypr., *ep.*, 45,3 (pp. 602,18 f.), *de eccl. unit.* 4 (pp. 212 f.) Excellent discussion in Hugo Koch, *Cathedra Petri* (Beihft z. ZNW no. 11, 1930)

Stephen he had already taken an active part in the transactions regarding the baptism of heretics, and had corresponded with Dionysios, bishop of Alexandria.¹ For that reason he was now drawn into the strife which had arisen in Egypt on account of the conduct of their bishop, and in the course of events he was able to bring to the Roman church advantages which were to bear fruit at a later period. In particular the theological discussions became, what at that time no one could have dreamt, a prelude to the great Arian controversy, which shook the entire church, at the beginning of the fourth century. Consequently it will be convenient to consider the affairs of the two Dionysii in that context.

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 7,5,6

Chapter Twelve

SYRIA AND BEYOND

THE GREAT CITY OF ANTIOCH WAS THE MILITARY AND political headquarters of Syria; it had seen many emperors and pretenders to the crown within its walls, and had experienced on its own body the various blows of fate which helped to shape the history of the world. It had been the point of departure of Hellenized Christianity, and the significance of the city had continually increased the influence of its Christian church. The abounding fertility of the soil and the favourable situation, in both commercial and political respects, brought much wealth to the province of Syria. All this flowed together in Antioch, the capital, creating there architectural beauty, and a luxurious way of living, to an extent with which not even Alexandria could compete. The upper classes of manufacturers and merchants, the thousands who belonged to the demimonde of the theatre, of the life of pleasure and of vice, the innumerable hosts of workers and workless, constituted a population which was indeed unified at bottom, and which was held together by boundless self-confidence, unrestrained search for pleasure, and unlimited love of banter. What they lacked was a noble seriousness, and a creative mentality. Ethnologically, the city was a mixture. There was a Macedonian leading class, which spoke Greek, and which since the days of the Seleucids had become highly diversified by the immigration of Hellenic and Hellenized families of varied origin. On the other hand, there was the Syriac-speaking, indigenous populace, with whom were mingled slaves and the lowest classes from every country.

Here, as elsewhere, the Jews kept closely together.¹ We have seen how the Christians separated themselves from them as a group. We have already discussed the fate and the theology characteristic of Bishop Ignatius, who died in Rome as a martyr, under Trajan.² We have no information, however, as to the outlook of his church at that time, nor as to events in the

¹ C. H. Kraeling in *Journ. Bibl. Lit.* 1932, 130–60

² Vol. I, pp. 236–48

church of Antioch in the following decades. The mere names contained in the traditional lists of bishops tell us nothing; all we hear is that Antioch was the starting-point of a series of important men in the gnostic movement, and we may therefore conclude, at least, that there were gnostic conventicles, perhaps there were larger churches, which competed with the orthodox group, and endeavoured to influence its inner development.¹ In the neighbouring town of Rhossos, the gnostic *Gospel of Peter* was made use of unsuspectingly in the church until Serapion, bishop of Antioch, drew towards the right, and forbade the book: but his attitude in the whole affair makes it clear, at the same time, that he was not able to master the problems of the period.² His predecessor, Theophilus, had been a writer: we have already discussed him as an Apologist, and mentioned his *Gospel-Harmony*³ (which perhaps should be regarded as an orthodox rival to Tatian's *Diatessaron*), and the latter was beginning to be accepted in Antioch. He had also written against Marcion, and against the Hermogenes whom Hippolytus and Clement of Alexandria knew, and to whom Tertullian had dedicated a polemic.⁴ What is extant of the writings of Theophilus shows that he was a man with a quite moderate power of judgment: since he wrote so much, the needs of his church must have made him a polemist against the numerous influences which were active at that time among the Christians in Antioch.

Possibly the recent assertion is correct,⁵ to the effect that the uncertainty of the inner situation is the reason why, after Ignatius and during the whole of the second century, Antioch never comes to our notice: its bishop is not mentioned amongst those who took part against Victor in the pronouncement of the eastern churches on the question of Easter. In any case, however, this weakness was overcome shortly afterwards. In A.D. 251 Bishop Fabius of Antioch called the entire east to his city in order to lend support to Novatian in his affairs, and subsequently Antioch always took a leading part in movements affecting church policy. Twenty years later, Bishop Paul

¹ W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit u. Ketzerei i. ält. Christentum* (1934) 70

² *Supra*, pp. 73, 98. Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 12

³ *Supra*, pp. 99, 187

⁴ *Supra*, p. 221 and Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 553–60

⁵ Bauer, *op. cit.*, 67

was already a grandseigneur of immense influence, even in mundane matters. As a consequence, it is not surprising that, in the second century, there are few extant records of Christianity in the region round about Antioch. In the third century, it is plain that the church was meeting with increased success, and about A.D. 300 we find bishops in nearly all the important towns of Syria and far beyond in the countryside.¹ The Christianity grouped round about Antioch was Greek in language and mode of thought.

In Syria, and probably here for the first time, Christianity began to develop a national cast: and in the first instance there appear to have been two starting-points, Arbela and Edessa. Edessa lay closer to Antioch, and here, during the storms of the wars of Rome with Parthia, a family of native princes had retained the throne; about A.D. 250, a person called Abgar IX was wearing the crown, and he attracted Christian scholars to his court, being described by them as a "saintly man" who had "become a believer".² At that time also, there was a "temple of the Christian church" in Edessa, which, we are told, was destroyed by a flood in September, A.D. 201.³ The importance of these notices must not be exaggerated to mean that Abgar had made Christianity the state religion of his little kingdom. Nevertheless they are not without significance.

About this period,⁴ Christianity took root in Edessa, its pioneer teacher being Bardesanes. He was born in the city, and became an eminent person living at the court of the prince, and well experienced in secular arts: an eye-witness tells, with astonishment, of his skill in archery.⁴ He was also the first Syrian of whom we know that he wrote learned treatises in his mother tongue, and that he composed poems: he was the founder of Syriac literature, which was primarily Christian. Eusebius speaks of him with great respect, calls him an outstanding man, and praises him as a fighter against

¹ Harnack, *Mission*, 2,672 f.

² Julius Africanus in the *Kestoī* (in Syncellus, *Chronogr.*, 1,676, 13 ed. Bonn) Bardesanes p. 607 11 ed. Nau. In addition, however, Bauer, *op. cit.*, 10 Felix Haase, *Altchr. Kirchengesch.* (1925) 85 f.

³ *Chron. Edessenum* 86 = 1,465 ed. Hallier. Erroneously questioned by Bauer, *op. cit.* 18, Haase, *op. cit.*, 89

⁴ I shall neglect the legend of Abgar; cf. *supra*, p. 76

Marcion and other heretics, and also declares that his polemic writings had been translated into Greek.¹ The Syrians of the following period, on the other hand, decry him heartily, and reckon him among the gnostic heretics: that is his place up to the present day. The polemic caused many impressions to be spread about him, which were partially or entirely false, and which sketched him in such a way that it required penetrating research before the main lines of his Christianity could be brought to the light of day on the basis of unobjectionable sources: but, recently, everything has become clear.²

A few fragments in Greek are extant, together with the original text of the *Dialogue on Fate* as used by Eusebius: in addition there is also the fragment of a poem on the Creation; the missing parts can be supplied from a good version in prose, and important deductions can be made from the poem. Firstly, it is not superfluous to say that Bardesanes did not feel himself to be the leader of a sect, but rather to belong unquestionably to the church universal existing everywhere. "What shall we say about ourselves, the 'new race' of Christians whom Christ has raised in all cities and in all countries by His own coming? We are all called Christians, by the one name of Christ, wherever we may be found. On the one day of Sunday, we come together, and, on the appointed days, we fast"—and then he proceeds to speak of the brethren in Gaul, Parthia, Judea, Persia, and Mesopotamia, without making any kind of distinction.³ He contrasts the unity of Christian custom, which is obedient to the law of Christ, with the manifold national laws which spring from human freedom. Bardesanes does not deny the significance of "fate"; its signs are to be found in the courses of the stars; but he limits their significance to corporeal things and to outer circumstances of life: all ethical action is due to the will, which decides for good or evil. It is possible for man to free himself from the compulsion of fate and attain freedom to obey God's good commandments; these correspond to man's nature and are gladly laid hold of by him.⁴

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 4,30

² The basis was laid by H. H. Schaeder in *ZKG*, 1932, 21–74. The text has been edited by F. Nau in *Patrologia Syriaca* 2 (1907), 492–675

³ Nau, *op. cit.*, par. 46 p. 607 f.

⁴ *Ibid.* par. 11–12, pp. 550–53

Here we have an ethical optimism on Greek lines, and corresponding to the enduring attitude of the Greek Church. It was only in the west, and in the person of Augustine, that Paul's denial of all human power for good was once more brought to life as a Christian conviction. According to Bardesanes's *Dialogue*, Christianity was a new way of life which subordinated to itself all differences of a national character, and to which men of goodwill gladly submitted: that had been the theme of the Apologists, and Bardesanes's doctrine agrees entirely on this point with the universal Christian view, in spite of the fact that the majority of theologians (but not the laity) shook their heads, as in duty bound, at his recognition of some of the workings of "fate". However, there was no serious opposition to his doctrine of the church catholic, and Eusebius gave hearty approval to his *Dialogue*.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that there was a speculative basis for his conception of the moral freedom of the will as aimed at the liberation of mankind from the compulsion of earthly bonds, and the restitution of man's true being; the basis is made clear in the poem on Creation. According to this poem, there were, in the beginning, five elements: the ether of light, fire, wind, water, and darkness, which last was equated with the sombre earth; their original balance was upset by an accident, and all became intermingled; "and they began to bite one another like ravening animals". God then sent down His logos, through whom He quieted the raging elements, and banished darkness into the deeps. The four other elements then returned to their own places. After the strife, a new order of things came into existence, the Kosmos; it no longer corresponded, however, to the original circumstances, but represented a mixture of elements as the outcome of the former struggle. In particular, the shining clarity of the higher elements was clouded by a remnant of darkness, viz. matter. "Therefore all nature and created things hasten to cleanse themselves and to eradicate whatever evil has been mixed in with them." Hence, elimination of the remaining "darkness" was the purpose of Creation, and the goal of history and evolution—and darkness was, as we may now remark, the evil element. According to the wording of the *Dialogue*, its elimination resulted from an ethical

process which restored mankind, and, along with him, the Kosmos, to its shining and pure original condition.

Like the gnostic conceptions of a similar sort which we have already described, this piece of mythology is only a pictorial garb for a speculative view of the universe. To the question about the origin of evil, Bardesanes replied that evil was hostility towards God, and was also what disturbed His ordination; it arose from causes which lay in the nature of the world, in any case beyond the reach of human will and obligation, but also beyond the divine volition, because the elements were not created by God, but were as eternal as He. Nevertheless, God dominated them by His logos, and showed mankind the way to liberation from evil by means of a virtuous will obedient to the logos. All was proved by skilful exegesis of the Old and New Testaments; Bardesanes found the proof there, and called himself a Christian in good faith. He freed the idea of God from the standing objection that the Almighty had not prevented the coming of evil, and as a consequence was responsible for it. He reached this point, however, by conceiving God merely as an organizer of the world, without being the Creator. The church could not let such a doctrine pass unchallenged.

Marcion had attempted to solve the same problem, but did not avoid the accusation of ditheism. His system, as such, implied a denial of the world: Creation was regarded in a purely negative manner as the work of a demiurge of a lower, not to say, an evil, character, and the way of redemption from it was that of a rigorous asceticism.¹ According to Bardesanes, however, Creation was the important act of God making redemption possible: he affirmed the world, with its light and splendour, and discovered in the human soul ethical powers which freed it from the might of darkness. As a consequence he wrote against the Marcionites, who, we may therefore gather, had already been active in Edessa. When, however, we remember that, c. A.D. 180, Theophilus the bishop of Antioch had written against the heretic, Hermogenes, who is also mentioned, with disapproval, in other sources; and when we also remember that the latter attempted to solve the problem

¹ Vol. I, pp. 251 ff.

of evil in the world by the doctrine of the eternity of matter, it is possible that we have reached one source of Bardesanes's speculations. Hermogenes speaks of matter as a mass without order and form, similar in its erratic movements to a pot boiling over, until God calmed it by His logos, and separated the ordered Kosmos from unordered matter.¹ All this harmonizes so well with the doctrines of Bardesanes that a connection seems very probable; and Hermogenes must have exercised an important influence in Syria, otherwise the bishops of Antioch would scarcely have written against him. However, Hermogenes speaks in the abstract language of philosophers, whereas Bardesanes, as a poet, gave plastic form to the philosophical conceptions of his theology.

It follows that the doctrine of the eternity of matter had reached Antioch, and the dangers of the doctrine had been foreseen; it is very probable that Bardesanes's heretical character was recognized in this city more quickly than elsewhere. A document originating in Edessa about A.D. 400,² although it has a legendary cast, asserts that Serapion, bishop of Antioch, had instituted a certain Palût as bishop of Edessa. This is probable. Serapion was bishop of Antioch c. A.D. 200, and, if he rightly recognized the significance of Bardesanes, it may have appeared important to him to assemble the orthodox in Edessa; and it is even possible that they had asked for Serapion's help. He consecrated a bishop for them in the person of Palût, and sent him to the threatened place with the appropriate commission. The new church was formed, but it was a small minority compared with the multitudes who held to Bardesanes, and who successfully claimed the name of Christians for themselves. Nay, here as elsewhere, the "catholic" church was regarded as a sect, and had to call itself the "Palûtians", after its leader and founder: that continued to be the case until into the fourth century;³ and the facts suggest that Palût was really the first catholic bishop of the city.

The surviving records are not sufficient to permit us to follow the effect of Bardesanes's theology on church life and practice,

¹ Hipp., *Refut.*, 8, 17, 2. Tert., *adv. Hermog.*, 39. 41. 44.

² *Doctrina Addai* ed. Phillips, p. 15, 10 = 50; cf. F. C. Burkitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff.

³ Ephraem Syrus, trans. by von Rücker (*Bibl. d. Kirchenwälder*, vol. 61) 2, 81 f. (2, 485 f. ed. Rom.)

on worship and custom: he wrote 150 hymns of importance, the number corresponding to the Psalter.¹ We are told that his son, Harmonios, diligently continued the poetic work of his father, and developed his metre further under Greek influence. This poetry was popular among the people and by it the ideas of the poet were spread.² The son did not retain his father's simplicity, but gave play to the fantasy of the gnostics; in this way all sorts of gnostic ideas were introduced into the church at Edessa. Moreover, about the same time, the independence of the royal house of Edessa came to an end. In A.D. 216, Caracalla marched against the Parthians and *en route* deposed Abgar IX, attaching the city to the province of Mesopotamia as a Roman colony.

Christians were to be found in the district of Osroëne outside the city of Edessa—letters were sent to Rome from many cities in this district in regard to the Easter dispute³—but we find no considerable traces of them in the immediately following period. Edessa remained their headquarters. Churches in Mesopotamia⁴ were known c. A.D. 250 to Dionysios of Alexandria:⁵ it is probable that there were Christians in Nisibis, certainly in Hatra;⁶ in the little frontier fortress of Dura, a house with a Christian chapel has recently been excavated, and appears to have been built c. A.D. 230; a leaf of parchment found at the same place proves that Tatian's *Diatessaron* was in use in the Greek original as the Gospel.⁷ Thus contemporary documents, recently discovered, prove, what many literary testimonies assert, that the *Diatessaron* was used as the Gospel in the Syrian east. We may also infer, therefore, that his ascetic views as to the nature of Christianity were widespread in that region.⁸ As a matter of fact, even in the fourth century, certain groups of orthodox Syrians regarded celibacy as the genuine form of Christianity, and administered baptism only to such as had decided on continence.⁹ That was the old tradition of the second century, and at best one can only argue whether Tatian

¹ Ephraem 2,554 ed. Rom.; cf. 2,66 ed. Lamy = 2,181 f. Rücker.

² Sozomenos 3,16,5-7; cf. Schaefer, *ZKG.*, 1932, 57. 61 f. and Nau, *op. cit.*, pp. 504 f.

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,23,4

⁴ Harnack, *Mission*, 2,678-98

⁵ Eus., *H.E.*, 7,5,2

⁶ Nau, *op. cit.*, p. 608,8

⁷ *Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Report V, 238 ff.; Kraeling, *vide supra*, p. 99, footnote 3

⁸ *Supra*, p. 99

⁹ Burkitt, *op. cit.*, p. 62 ff.

or Marcion was the more responsible for the wide acceptance of this attitude.

Christianity had also spread over the Tigris into the region of Adiabene, striking root first in Arbela, and then penetrating far and wide. A chronicle of this city is extant¹ composed in c. A.D. 550, which, in spite of much legendary material, preserves an uncommonly sound, historical tradition from an earlier period. Addai is mentioned as missionary in Arbela, and his name also occurs in the legendary early history of the church at Edessa. The name is Jewish, and is an abbreviation of Adonijah; hence the "Apostle Addai" was of Jewish origin. The Jewish section of Arbela was particularly influential, and, under Claudius, the royal house had gone over to Judaism.² The chronicle fixes the founding of the Christian church in Trajan's time. The question has been raised whether the Jewish community in this district provided the starting-point for the Christian missionaries, and we must grant it as extremely probable.³

In the *Tractates* of Aphrahat, we possess detailed evidence as to the circumstances of Christianity in Syria c. A.D. 340, from which circumstances it is possible to draw inferences in regard to the earlier period. Christians lived here in the closest association with the Jews, were vilified and persecuted by them; but they argued with them, and defended their doctrines with Biblical proofs. Closer inspection of Syrian Christianity shows that it possessed characteristic elements which demonstrate not only its great age, but also its relation with Jewish ways. Nothing is said in regard to philosophical speculations, nor the logos theology. The fundamental dogmas are stated in a few words; they include a confession⁴ of God, as Creator of the world and of men; He gave the Law to Moses. The next article confesses Christ, and His holy spirit enters man at baptism, and assists him to attain resurrection. But in order to retain the spirit, the Christian virtues must be exercised, a

¹ E. Sachau, *d. Chronik v. Arbela. Abh. Akad. Berlin*, 1915, no. 6, 17 ff. 61 f. with plan. F. Haase, *Altchr. Kirchengesch.*, 1925, pp. 94–109

² Jos., *Ant.*, 20, 17 ff. Schürer, *Gesch.*, 3, 169

³ Sachau, *D. Chronik v. Arbela*, 1915, no. 6, 30. 42. Also Sachau, *Z. Ausbr. d. Christentums in Asien (Abh. Akad. Berlin*, 1919, no. 1, 5 f.)

⁴ Aphraates, *hom.*, 1, 19 ed. Parisot pp. 44 f.

special place being occupied by asceticism. Christianity of this kind must not be simply equated with the moralism of the Hellenistic synagogues as, say, in *i Clem.*, although in its fundamentally legalistic attitude, which receives much emphasis, it differs only slightly; it contains many quotations from Paul, but not a breath of his spirit: indeed the emphasis placed on asceticism carries one still farther away from Judaism. The only thing showing a Hellenistic element and a Pauline view is the doctrine of the spirit. Whereas in regions enjoying a Greek civilization, the entire problem dealt with in speculations on the Trinity was enlivened by efforts to attain immortality, in Syria there was a primitive doctrine of the resurrection: this doctrine being based on ideas originating in rabbinic theology, and on religious motives that did not go beyond the moral sphere.¹ Aphrahat himself was not unacquainted with rabbinic learning, and, moreover, the Bible used in the Syrian churches preserved a text which was dependent upon Jewish tradition. These facts justify the supposition that, in these eastern regions and in the second and third centuries, Judaism helped, unwillingly, the work of Christian missionary propaganda, as also did the Judaism of the Mediterranean world, in the first and second centuries. Nevertheless, Syrian Christianity was not mediated from Jerusalem, nor from the Jewish Christians who set out thence; rather, it bore the stamp of Antioch from the beginning.

The Christians also spread in a very remarkable manner further to the east. The *Chronicle* of Arbela gives a list of seventeen bishoprics which lay on the left bank of the Tigris, and were in existence in A.D. 225, when the Sassanid rule was established. The list begins high among the mountains in the neighbourhood of present-day Diarbekr, and descends to the Persian gulf. A supplementary note says that Nisibis and Seleucia-Ctesiphon had no bishops in the Parthian period, "on account of fear of the pagans", but that this lack was supplied under the Persian rule. From Bardesanes² we learn that there were Christians, c. A.D. 220, in the regions of the Parthians, in Media, Persia, and Bactria; and the notices contained in the *Chronicle* of Arbela support that assertion in regard to the eastern

¹ *Ibid.*, 6,14 pp. 292 ff.

² Bardesanes, Nau, pp. 607 f.

bank of the Tigris. Presumably, Christianity penetrated from that district further towards the east: a trustworthy notice in another chronicle¹ says that the Persian king Shapur, after capturing Valerian the Roman emperor (A.D. 260), permitted the bishops banned by the emperor to return to the frontier districts, and that he settled Roman prisoners in Babylonia, Susiana, and Persis: through these people Christianity became extremely widespread. Soon afterwards, in Rew-Ardashir, the seat of the archbishop of Persis (north of the Persian Gulf), two churches were built, one for Greek-speaking Christians and the other for Syrian Christians. This shows that there was a mixture of cultural traditions; these developed, and became of outstanding significance in the following period.

Side by side with the indigenous religions of the Syrians and the Iranians at the beginning of the third century, Judaism and Christianity were spreading far towards the east. Judaism had reached a critical stage, and was compelled to draw a line between itself and Hellenism. Once more this mighty western force was giving impressive evidence of its vitality. The synagogue of Dura, with its beautifully painted walls, shows to what extent the local Jews were ready to sacrifice their own tradition to the attraction of Hellenic culture. Moreover in this district, this was a new phenomenon: beneath the building erected in A.D. 245, there had been an earlier synagogue which had carefully followed national custom in the many coloured decorations.² That fact makes it plain that even in these lands there was a struggle between the Greek tradition and the Talmud; details have been lost to history, but they constitute part of the tragic lot of the people of Israel. The Babylonian Talmud was victorious, and it gave the spiritual direction later followed by the Jews. We may infer that Christianity gained from the contest, and attracted the malcontents to itself. Side by side with the church catholic, which was gradually confirming its position, Marcionite churches flourished, and also circles of gnostics both within and without the Church—the east was not less stirred by religious forces than was the west.

¹ *Chronicle of Seert*, ed. Scher (*Patrol. orient.*, 4), p. 222. Sachau, *Sitz. Akad. Berlin*, 1916, 961 ff.

² Rostovtzeff in *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 1934, 206. *Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Report VI, 332 ff.

It was in this many-sided life that a new world-religion was born. Its founder was Mani, a youth in whose veins ran the blood of the Iranian royal family; he had grown up in south Babylonia, where his father had joined a sect of Baptists who practised an ascetic type of life. Here the son must have met with all sorts of gnostic doctrines with a Christian name, and these must have combined with the basic ideas of his ancestral Persian religion: when, at 24 years of age, he set out to convert the world, his doctrine was already complete in principle. He travelled, in the first instance, to India, and there founded a church. If he had not known it previously, he learned there who Buddha was, and that Buddhism was a great religion: but obviously India taught him nothing new.¹ When Shapur I mounted the throne, in A.D. 241, Mani appeared once more in his native land and, after being graciously received by the king, began the important part of his missionary work. He laboured in the Sassanid empire undisturbed for more than thirty years, and was able to send his disciples out to all the ends of the earth. Then the anger of a new king fell upon him, and the hatred of the Parsee priests brought about his crucifixion: he died in this way A.D. 276.

He drew up his doctrines in a series of writings, of which embarrassingly numerous quotations have been preserved, and also fragments of which have lately been discovered in caves and rubbish heaps. Moreover, disciples wrote sequels to, and commented on, the master's works; the liturgical books of their churches continued to be produced, and so Mani's teaching continued to expand. Generations of modern scholars laboured fruitlessly on it until discoveries, made in our own day, put the key into our hands.² Earlier, it was sometimes thought that Mani was possibly a Christian heretic, and that he ought to be included among the gnostics: the view is correct to the extent that his doctrine has the characteristic marks of gnosticism. If preferred, Mani can be described as the historically most significant of all the gnostics. He himself, however,

¹ C. Schmidt, *Sitz. Akad. Berlin*, 1933, 47 f. Schaefer, *Urf. u Fortb. d. manich. Syst.*, 87 (in *Vorträge d. Bibliothek Warburg*, 1924–25)

² See previous note and further the summary by Polotsky in Pauly-W. suppl. 6, 240–271. H. H. Schaefer, *Manich. u spätantike Religion* (*Zeits. f. Missionskunde* 50 (1935), 65–85)

aimed at being more than merely another gnostic, and in fact was more.

He intended to found a religious community which would comprehend the entire world for the first time. All religions hitherto had been confined in space:¹ "Those which have spread in the west (i.e. Christianity) have not reached the east, and those which have spread in the east (Parseeism and Buddhism) have not reached the west. My hope, however, will extend to the west, and will also extend to the east, and its preaching will be heard in every language, and it will be preached in every city. My church is superior to earlier churches in this, its prime characteristic." His programme of world-wide missionary activity became fact. Manichæism penetrated into north Africa in the west, and into China in the east; and was preached in a multitude of languages. Granted that it quickly came to an end in the west, nevertheless it endured about a thousand years in Central Asia. The attention which the master paid to the national characteristics of the different peoples gave rise to a corresponding modulation of doctrinal form: Iranians heard names sounded in their ears which were familiar to them in the Avesta: in Hellenistic regions, philosophical conceptions took the place of mythological description, whereas New Testament elements were emphasized among Christians. He did not reject the earlier religions outright, but recognized them as preparatory stages, and he appraised Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus, as divinely-sent forerunners. He described himself as the paraclete prophesied by Jesus, and thus claimed a place among the number of men of God regarded as holy by Christians.²

As in the case of Bardesanes, the starting-point of his theological thought was the problem of evil in the world. He did not solve it, like the Syrian, in a mediating and optimistic sense, but by the dogma of an absolute evil, eternally opposed to the absolute good. This dualism was the fundamental dogma on which all understanding of the world must be based, and was seen in the opposition of light and darkness, of God and matter. Quite on gnostic lines, Mani taught, further, that this world was the result of a catastrophe. Darkness strove

¹ Schmidt, p. 45

² *Ibid.* 56 f.

to reach the light, and, out of the struggle between the two mutually opposed powers, a mixed universe came into being in which the substance of light was imprisoned in the chains of darkness. Moreover, man was himself a mixed creature. But God made use of him in order to liberate the light. He sent His envoy on earth to teach man his worth, and to show him the way in which he might liberate his own divine substance of light, and be able to bring it back to its original condition. This way was that of asceticism, the breaking of the material bonds of the kingdom of darkness: it was particularly important to refrain from the propagation of children, as that would bind new souls of light ever afresh in new bodies.

Moreover, no animal was to be hurt or killed, no plants uprooted, and no fixed dwelling established in any place in this world. The "elect", the perfect disciple of the master, must wander about and preach the new gospel: his food, which was to be entirely vegetarian, would be provided by another group of Mani's adherents, the "catechumens", who would remain in the present world, and, by their "alms", make the way of redemption possible for the elect. The catechumens would be satisfied with intellectual agreement with, and active support of, the faith to which the "elect" would dedicate their practical life. The members of the Church confined their acts of worship properly so called to offering prescribed prayers, and carrying out prescribed fasts, together with the confession of sins. Such confession exercised its own redemptive power on their natures since it was an act in which the soul became aware of itself. There were no sacraments nor mysticism of any kind in Manichæism, points on which it differed from both Hellenistic gnosticism and Christianity.

The principles of this doctrine of redemption were clear and simple, but Manichæism gave them a mythological form which left earlier gnosticism far behind. Its structure was involved, and had a multiplicity of parts borrowed from every sphere. The kingdom of light was governed by the highest god, "father of greatness", whose nature exhibited a series of five conceptions: opposed to him was the land of darkness, with the five "sombre" elements, smoke, fire, wind, water, darkness. The entire material world was

similarly divided into pentads, a world ceaselessly at war with itself, and so only able to organize its powers when it looked beyond its own frontier, saw the glory of the kingdom of light, and decided to conquer it. God sent His personified powers in defence, particularly the "primordial" man with the five "light" elements, air, wind, light, water, fire. In the course of the struggle, primordial man abandoned the elements of light: they were swallowed up by darkness, and became so mixed with it that they grew to a living unity with the foreign elements, and forgot their home. Moreover, primordial man fell for a time into this unconscious condition but was rescued by the "living spirit" which was sent down from above; at the same time the *nous*, heavenly reason, which dwelt in him, was also rescued. Thereupon the world was created for the purpose of redeeming the imprisoned light elements: a highly developed mythology depicts the judgment which the living spirit pronounced on the daemons (archons) of the world of darkness, from whose skin, flesh, and bones, the Kosmos was constructed. From the parts of light which had remained uncontaminated, the sun and moon were created as the "ships of light"; in these, all other light elements that became free, were to gather in order to voyage home to the kingdom. The increase of the incoming multitudes of light can be observed each month as the moon increases in size.

At this point, the "third envoy" descends in order to begin the work of redemption, the first act being the sexual seduction of the daemon-archons by attractive light beings: great multitudes of light are thereby set free and give darkness concern about the rest of its booty. The latter, therefore, creates the human pair, Adam and Eve, in a fantastically extravagant manner. They are ordained to take the germs of light which dwell in them and, by sexual reproduction, bind them ever anew to the flesh, i.e., the material of darkness, and thereby make further liberation impossible. But even this plan of defence fails. A new figure in the mythological drama now came down to Adam in the person of the "Jesus of glory", and taught him to recognize the character of light which his soul possessed, and which had a divine origin. Man thus rebelled against the bonds of matter, and made to long for freedom. Jesus

brought *nous*, the divine reason, as an operative factor to mankind—somewhat the same as the Christian apologists mean by the term logos—and created in human hearts five “members of the soul”—i.e. elements in the understanding—and the five virtues, love, faith, perfection, patience, and wisdom: those were the weapons which the soul could use in its fight for freedom.

In the course of time, however, the operations of *nous* are forgotten; messengers are continually being sent to earth to advise men and direct them in the right way: these were the founders of the great religions, recognized by Mani as his forerunners, the last of them being Jesus. In this mythology, Jesus can, of course, only be a preacher of *nous*, but He is frequently identified with primordial man, or described as his son; and He is also set side by side with the third envoy, or put in his place—His sufferings and death are not regarded as historical events, nor as genuine experiences on the part of Jesus. For the Manicheans, the Passion is a mythological event, and Jesus on the Cross means the soul chained and bound to matter. In his letters, Mani regularly follows the example of Paul, and describes himself as “apostle of Jesus Christ”; in this way, he consciously claims his place in the long series of the divinely sent envoys of *nous*, the last and final herald of redemption by light. All that now remained was the end of this world as predicted and depicted already in the New Testament, and the triumph of light over darkness.

The outlines have only been reproduced quite roughly in the above discussion, but if we take the mythological elements exhibiting innumerable details and applications, and follow them in their rhythm as shaped by the numbers five and twelve, we shall obtain some conception of the variety in the Manichean view of the world; over and above all this, it contains numerous cross currents, illogical interpolations, parallels, and changes of images, names, and ideas, all confused together in such a manner that no conspectus is possible. Moreover, whereas the principles of the new religion remained unchanged for centuries, yet even during the master’s lifetime, the fantasy of his school took forcible possession of the mythological images, developed them further in some respects, simplified

them in others, and introduced new colours until the ground tints totally disappeared. As far as we can tell, that is a characteristic phenomenon found among all gnostic schools, but in Manichæism it is particularly plain, and has contributed more than a little towards our difficulty in understanding its original form. Nevertheless, even in Mani's own thought, the visionary figures of gnostic fantasy were dominant, and drew him aside from simple observation and unsophisticated knowledge.

His religion was a development of both Christianity and gnosticism, and he was quite conscious of both: but the Greek spirit, which demanded rational clarity, had departed, and the mythological redeemers had silenced the voice of the Galilean preacher. The roots of religion as found in history have been lost, the incomprehensible godhead alone surviving; sparks of whom abide in the human soul and await redemption—and man, who, by negating this world, redeems both himself and God. This religion was not capable of a genuine growth. For a millennium it retained a mummified form, almost unnoticed in Europe, and lost its soul. Christianity entered the living stream of spiritual growth in the west, and, in the course of centuries, changed with it: in every age, however, in the Christian churches, the ancient, simple words of the gospel re-echoed unchanged.

Chapter Thirteen

EGYPT

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STRIKING FACT THAT DURING THE first hundred years of Christian preaching, and indeed for a considerably longer period, Egypt never comes within our horizon; as a consequence when scholars attempted at a later date to write the history of the Church, they tried, though clumsily, to fill the blanks of knowledge from a fictitious list of bishops of Alexandria, and a legend that Mark founded the Church. Nevertheless Egypt enjoyed the liveliest intercourse with the east and Rome, both of which were already strongly penetrated by Christianity. There must be special grounds for the absence of information, and, recently,¹ a theory has been advanced that, at the earliest period in Egypt, a Christianity flourished which was, later, felt to differ too widely from the ways of the Church in the following period; in other words it was heretical. On this theory, the orthodox writers of history would have had every reason for silence; and, in fact, we must admit that all the notices about Christians in Egypt during the first three-quarters of the second century have to do with heretics.

Basilides first appears as a teacher during the reign of Hadrian, and Valentine similarly in the early Antonine period. These great gnostics were soon surrounded by a swarm of disciples and rivals; we even find Apelles the Marcionite present for a short time.² Moreover, although the Church repudiated the gnosticism which surrounded it in the Mediterranean world, that heresy continued to reverberate for centuries, particularly in literature translated into Coptic, as well as on papyrus in the Greek original. In addition, a thoroughly gnostic product, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*,³ is shown by its name to have been the one that was quite customary in Egypt, and was used rather than our four gospels. It follows that "the Egyptians", or, more precisely, the Egyptian Christians, were

¹ W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit u. Ketzerei*, 49–64

² Vol. I, 262. 280

³ Klostermann, *Apokrypha II* (Kl. Texte 8, 2nd edit. p. 12 f.); cf. *ZNW*. 1936, pp. 24 ff. M. R. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 ff.

gnostics. The *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which was also current in Egypt, was not less gnostic; it was cited by Clement and Origen, and is probably to be differentiated from the text used by the Jewish Christians of Syria:¹ it is possible that it was used by groups of Jewish-Christian gnostics. All these facts support the presumption that in Egypt—similarly to Syria—Christianity took root at first in gnostic forms, and that the church catholic was victorious in this region only at a late date, and after a severe struggle with gnosticism; possibly Rome gave help of vital significance. It is also possible that the remarkable independence of what might be called the parish churches of Alexandria, and the late development of the episcopacy, were alike connected with these facts.²

In any case, the earliest signs of the church catholic are found in the person, and at the time, of Bishop Demetrius (A.D. 189–231), and the first great representative of the church catholic was Clement of Alexandria. In all probability he was born in Athens, and his writings give the impression that he was a genuine Greek. His family came to possess Roman citizenship by the aid of Flavian, as is shown by his full name, Titus Flavius Clemens: it has been suggested³ that his patron was the consular Flavius Clemens⁴ executed by Domitian. Like the Apologist Justin⁵ he travelled throughout the world in search of wisdom, and learned much from teachers in Hellas, lower Italy, and the orient; but all his longings were satisfied by Pantainos whom he found in Egypt.⁶

The latter belongs to the not very small number of extraordinary teachers whose memory has been preserved to history only by the grateful recollections of their eminent pupils. Over and above all this, Eusebius mentions the rumour that Pantainos had been a Stoic, and had made a missionary journey to India.⁷ Modern attempts to reconstruct his lectures from the writings of Clement may be regarded as failures.⁸ We must reckon Pantainos as belonging to a group of “presbyters” often quoted by Clement, i.e. to those of an older

¹ Vol. 1, 186, Klostermann, *op. cit.*, p. 5 f., no. 5. 27

² *Supra*, pp. 64 f.

³ O. Stählin in the excellent introduction to his translation: *Bibl. d. Kirchenväter*, 2nd series, vol. 7, p. 10

⁴ *Supra*, p. 160

⁵ Justin, *dial.*, 2

⁶ Clem., *Strom.*, I, II, I f.

⁷ All the notices have been assembled by Harnack, *Altchr. Lit.*, I 291–96

⁸ J. Munck, *Unters. über Clemens v. Alex.* (1933) 173–204

generation, who taught him only by word of mouth, and whom he regarded as trustworthy vehicles of early Christian tradition. Irenæus, too, felt himself dependent on a quite similar group of "presbyters". Pantainos, however, was the most influential among them, because he was the head of the "Alexandrian catechumen school".¹ Only at a later date do we learn fuller particulars about the school: under Origen it was a centre of Christian scholarship, employing the methods of ancient science and learning; it was attended by adherents of all religions and philosophies. The early stages of the Christian school were also probably characterized by the breadth of horizon corresponding to the spirit of Greek learning which had been at home in Alexandria from early in the Ptolemaic period; it is likely that the school was interested in philosophy and Biblical study as found in Egyptian gnosticism, with interests which served to link the school with the growing church catholic.

Whatever the beginnings may have been, Clement succeeded Pantainos, stamped his personality upon the school, and gave it a character which can be clearly and unambiguously expressed in the formula of "a Christian gnosis of a consciously catholic type". All we know of the rest of Clement's life can be said in a few words. He first became well known under the emperor Commodus (A.D. 180–192).² The persecution under Septimius Severus (A.D. 202–03) scattered the Christian teachers of the town,³ and, in the year A.D. 211, we meet again with Clement carrying an episcopal communication from Cappadocian Cæsarea to Antioch. About five years later, he was mourned as dead.⁴

The notices in regard to his work as a writer are more detailed and provide valuable information which extends our knowledge beyond the extant works: in his *Church History*, Eusebius lists those with which he was acquainted, and the Constantinopolitan scholar, Photios, caused Clement's works to be read aloud (*c.* A.D. 850) while he dictated copious notes to his secretary

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 5,10,1. 4

² Eus., *H.E.*, 5,11,1; also E. Schwartz in Eus., *H.E.*, vol. 3,29. Julius Africanus fragm. 52 (Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, 2nd edit. 2,307)

³ *Supra*, p. 165. Eus., *H.E.*, 6,3,1

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,11,6. 14,9. Harnack, *Chronologie*, 2,6

on every paragraph.¹ Three large works and a small tractate are extant, but only short notices and fragments of other writings.² The three principal writings are connected in substance with each other, and, in spite of all the hesitation which has been felt about the term, they may confidently be described as a trilogy. The first was intended to convert the reader to Christianity, the second to instruct in the Christian manner of life, the third to describe the ideal of a complete Christian as initiated into the deep things of knowledge. Clement fixed his plan at quite an early date, but, in carrying out the third part, his mind oscillated, and after many delays he was finally obliged to leave it unfinished.³

Clement lived in the midst of the lively mental activity of his time, and his eyes were open to the crowd of ideas which were nowhere else developed in such varied ways as in Alexandria. Here exact science was quite at home, and for a long time the reflection of a fading glory shone over it. When Clement first came to the city, the astronomer, Claudius Ptolemaios, who was responsible for the cosmology which was to be normative for the next millennium, had died shortly before. Philology still maintained its tradition, and Apollonios Duskolos wrote on Greek accidence and syntax. Athenaios lived in Naukratis close by, and prepared a Platonic feast from the content of several handbooks and numerous pigeon holes, as Aulus Gellius had already done in the west: and the educated public accepted his invitation gladly. By that time the great gnostics had already passed away, but their schools remained, and influenced both Christians and pagans. Those who pursued philosophical inquiries, held Plato to be the most important force, and Ammonios, who was to be his prophet, was still undiscovered, and still carrying bales into the warehouses at the harbour.

Clement felt himself at home in a world of this kind; he wrote for it, and enjoyed a wide public, because he was already one of themselves, and had no need to struggle for recognition as

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 13, 1–7. Photios, *Bibl. cod.*, 109–11

² Ed. by O. Stählin, 1905–09 translation of the *Protr. Paedag.* and *Strom.*, I–III in *Bibl. d. Kirchenväter*, 2nd series, vol. 7. 8. 17 (1934–36); Engl. transl. by W. Wilson in the Ante-Nicene Christ. Library, Vol. 4. 12. 22. 24 (1867–72)

³ Clem., *Paed.*, 1, 1 f. *Strom.* 4, 3

was the case, e.g., with Justin and his fellow Apologists. In Alexandria, mental life and culture had developed more rapidly than elsewhere, a fact which signified a better pathway for Christianity. Clement was a philosopher and a gnostic, a philosopher at the beginning, a gnostic at the end, but both as a Christian: and he tried to prove to the world that it was in this very combination that the solution of its problems was to be found; at the same time it afforded complete insight into the apparently simple and broadly outlined doctrines of the church catholic. He expressed these opinions to his readers in a vocabulary and a style expected of a writer of *belles-lettres*.

He took trouble to write Attic Greek, and, where it seemed to him appropriate, he made use of the optative mood although it was already dying out in living speech. Occasionally, he interwove elegant acrostics, and other grammatical tit-bits. He constructed rhetorical sentences effectively, and his balanced clauses in twos and threes or longer series, frequently even with a rhythmic movement, made pleasant reading. Then again, artistic periods rolled musically along, filled with the vocabulary of impassioned language. The modes, which were usual at the time as effective oratory, were applied by Clement to attain his purpose, nor did he refrain here and there from contrasting the "unsophisticated" and "simple language" which he used "merely to serve his purpose", with the ornamental "cooing of doves", usual in the "ear-ticklings of the Sophists": these very phrases are quoted from his *Handbook*.¹ Like Tertullian in the west, so Clement in the east (where it was more difficult) was the first Christian whom the literary world was compelled to recognize as a modern writer in the full sense of the term. It regarded Clement as a sophist equally with Aristides or Philostratos, and felt that it was possible to take up his writings, with their special content, without spoiling one's good taste.

First of all, there was a *Protreptikos*, an "address aiming at conversion": this was a customary title for rhetorical documents intended to encourage men to come to a certain decision, and was employed both in political rhetoric and among philosophers and moralists: Aristotle wrote a *Protreptikos*; so did Epicurus,

¹ Clem., *Strom.*, 1,22,4 f. 2,3,1 and frequently

and a considerable number of Stoics, including Kleanthes, Chrysippus, and Poseidonios. Clement chose a similar title in order to show the reader that it was intended to convert him to Christianity, but, both here and in his other writings, he was right in avoiding the dryness of a philosophical schoolmaster, and in using the language of an elegant and modern Sophist: the subject-matter would show that his actual purpose was serious.

In this work, he reproduces the bewitching songs of Amphion, Arion, and Orpheus, and the cicada alights helpfully on the lyre of Eunomos—but what is the significance of these ancient sages? Error and Bacchic madness, slavery and the tyranny of daemons. Soon, however, the voice of eternal truth can be heard in the new song of the divine logos, “which banishes worry and ill will, and causes us to forget suffering”. This pure song of harmony will be heard to the ends of the world and weave everything closely together according to God’s fatherly will. The lyre and the zither are mindless instruments which the logos contemns. His instrument of many notes is the great universe, and mankind the microcosm; its harmonious music, produced by the spirit, is his accompaniment when he sings the praises of God. Thus the meaning of the new song is that the logos, who was in the beginning and who had created the world, has become visible and has appeared to us as Christ the Saviour, the teacher of the right life, the life which leads to immortality.

Such words reflect the beginning of a Christian sense of life such as we have not hitherto met. It is no longer the defiant, polemical tone of the Apologists condemning wrong and insisting on righteousness; it is not the fanatical hatred and the forensic skill seen in Tertullian; rather, superior conviction and calm assurance help Clement to express his ideas in poetic language, and produce a hymn of triumph to Christ as the herald of the final and eternal truth.

The very first sections of the book lead the reader up to the heights: the subject-matter is to be the logos of the world, and this logos has appeared as Christ, after being prophesied in the Bible and preached by John the Baptist. Then the reader experiences a sense of great disquietude as the argument

deteriorates, and Clement discusses the long-silent oracles of forgotten gods, and the shameless features of obscure mysteries. True, Clement soon enters on the customary polemic against ancient forms of worship; the unavoidable themes are handled in detail. The Sibyl is made to bear witness on behalf of the truth. Philosophers are cross-examined, and Plato, who stands close to the gateway which leads to a final knowledge of God, is compelled to confess that the Hebrews were his tutors. Even Xenophon, Kleanthes, and, in particular, Pythagoras are called in as preachers of a true doctrine of God. Then follows a multitude of quotations selected from the poets, some of the quotations being taken from anthologies known to us elsewhere; then with an impressive independence, the prophets of the Old Testament follow on, accompanied by the Sibyl, as if anything else were impossible. This intentional blotting out of the boundary between Hellenic and Biblical writings raises the unity of the divine revelation in the entire world to the point of being an implicit conviction, with which, in the sequel, the doctrines of the New Testament writings are harmonious. Later a thousand voices from all regions of the world combine in a unity of divine harmony, a single chorus rises, which the logos conducts as choirmaster, concluding with the theme of the final truth expressed as "Abba, dear Father".¹

Thus far Clement has been sketching in broad lines. The doubts of the hearers now come to expression, and he piles up urgent exhortations, in earnest and in satire, against these doubts in order to compel hesitating hearts to make the decision that would mean salvation: as a pastor of souls, he is always finding fresh reasons, winding up with brilliant images. The sirens sit on cliffs dangerous to life, and sing the seductive song of worldly pleasure. But you must remain in the ship which the logos steers, and bind yourself like Odysseus to the mast: then you are certain of voyaging to the heavenly harbour; you shall celebrate the mysteries of the logos on God's holy mountain, and dance in the circle of the righteous and of the angels round about the uncreated and eternal God, who is truly one. Jesus addresses mankind, all who possess reason, barbarian and Hellene, the entire human race whom he

¹ Clem., *Protr.*, 88,3

created according to the Father's will: "Listen, you thousand tribes, come to me"—and then follows a rhetorical finale of exceptional artistry: the words of Jesus echo ever more mightily, shorter sentences strike on the attention of listeners like hammers on the anvil; immortality, *aphtharsia*, and gnosis flare up and re-echo in the Saviour's call, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

We now come to Clement's peroration; he begins in a tempestuous mood, then, becoming more leisurely, he takes up Christ's warning and faces philosophic hearers with the choice of "the truth of the logos or the illusion of the masses". The logos makes you the friend of God, and everything will be yours just as everything is God's, for what friends possess they possess in common. Indeed, it may even be claimed that the Christian alone is devout, and rich, and nobly born, the image of God; we believe that he who is in harmony with reason, and has become holy through Christ Jesus, is already to that extent like God. This blessing is spoken of in the prophetic word, "I said ye are gods and all of you children of the most high." That is the final word that Clement has to say to the Greeks: his purpose is to show them the way to deification; Christ's promise is the fulfilment of the deepest human longing. The *Protreptikos* then closes.

Clement's second book follows immediately on the first, and develops before the reader's eye the plan of a trilogy. The logos has inspired man to moral endeavour—the *Protreptikos* was intended to prove that point—and it now comes forward as tutor in order to edify his soul with advice and encouragement: hence the theme of the work, upon which we are entering, is Christ as tutor (*Paidagogos*). The description of Christ as teacher (*Didascalos*) is reserved for future treatment when theological doctrine and revelation will form the subject-matter. In the first work, Clement had really had pagans in mind, and had taken account of their views and prejudices, but now, in the *Paidagogos*, he clearly draws the line between his own doctrine and those gnostic theories in which a gulf separates faith and knowledge. According to these theories, the psychics and the average writings of the church catholic stand on one side of the gulf, make shift with blind faith, and

understand the Bible literally; on the other side are the pneumatica to whom the Spirit reveals the knowledge of divine secrets, and who pierce through the letter of scriptural words to a deeper sense. They and they alone are complete Christians.

Clement refuses to recognize anything of this sort of thing. He who has been baptized has thereby become a complete Christian, illuminated, son of God, perfected, immortal—just as Christ gave us an example by His baptism. Baptism takes the Christian, at one stroke, out of the kingdom of darkness, and puts him into the shining light of the knowledge of God; sin falls from him like a dark cloud; and, with the pure eyes of the Spirit, he looks towards heaven to behold the divine. All who have been baptized have set aside earthly passions, and are spiritual men, pneumatica, before the Lord. Faith is the essence of the Christian life in the present world; it seizes in advance what will be in the future, and therefore it is comprehensive and perfect—for what can stand higher than eternal life as seized by faith, a life which only becomes actual after the resurrection? Gnosis is not essentially different from faith, but is the new light now come to awareness.¹ The *Paidagogos* gives no hint how Clement was, later, to construe the term gnosis.

We have seen how the question of the origin of evil, or of sin, frequently disturbed the minds of Christian thinkers. With occasional side-glances at gnostic opinions, Clement reduces the problem to a discussion whether, in God's case, righteousness harmonizes with goodness, anger and punishment with kindly promises; and in the context of his argument, he reaches an easy solution by the theory of the divine tutelage: he refers not only to Biblical passages but quotes Plato's *Gorgias*, and he opposes the conception of a righteous God to false ideas of the divine wrath; "The one who exercises choice is guilty; God is innocent", says Plato, and Paul agrees. The cause of sin is to be found in human free will²—but in the breath of the spirit of God, which man received at Creation, lies the worth of man whom God loves; here, too, is the reason why He sends on earth His only begotten son.³ At this point Clement touches upon the

¹ Clem., *Paed.*, 1,25–31; cf. 32–52

² *Op. cit.*, 1,62–70; cf. Plato, *Rep.*, 10 p. 617e

³ Clem., *Paed.*, 1,7 f.

gnostic view of the spark of light, or the nucleus of *pneuma*, which rests in man, and which would constrain God to give redemption.¹

Man whom He had made from dust, God brings to a new birth by water, makes him grow by means of the spirit, trains him by the Word, brings him by His commandments to sonship and salvation; in order that, by His help the earth-born might be transformed into a holy and heavenly man, and thus fill the scriptural word: "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." What God then said is completely fulfilled in Christ, whereas all the rest of mankind remain at the stage of "likeness". But we desire to fulfil the Father's will, to hear the word of the logos-paidagogos, and in our lives to imitate the redemptive life of our Saviour. He gives us the commandments and describes their nature in order that we may be able to fulfil them. This kind of life is simple and makes no claims; it is self-sufficient, and moves, without a burden of cares, towards eternity. The logos guides it with his instructions, which are in accordance with reason.

What is contrary to right reason is sin, and leads to sufferings. Obedience to the reason of the logos is what we Christians call faith, and that leads automatically to the fulfilment of what the Stoic philosophers call "duties". The Christian life, to which the *Paidagogos* now directs us, is a sum of reasonable actions which are covered by the Lord's commandments, divine principles which have been written down in Holy Scripture to provide us with spiritual guidance.² In this way the basis of a Christian doctrine of ethics is provided: Christ the logos, the world principle of reason, has himself undertaken the upbringing of the immature Christian race. He has written down His commandments in the Bible of the Old and New Testaments. He brings about their fulfilment in individual Christians by His holy spirit, but also determines all other obligatory actions round about in the world, because "duty" is always the consequence of a rational principle, which therefore proceeds from the logos. It is not surprising, but due to an inner necessity, that Christian and Stoic ethics are in agreement. All this becomes clear in the last chapter of the

¹ *Supra*, pp. 273 f., and vol. I, pp. 290 f.

² Clem., *Paed.*, 1,98–103

first book of the *Paidagogos*, and it is prominent at every turn in the two following books, which set out the practical consequences of the basic principles. Clement is a disciple of the Stoics, also, in so far as he constructs his ethics not only in the form of general principles, but also discusses systematically the various spheres of life, and makes his teaching clear in individual cases—what we should call casuistry.

Hence, with the beginning of the second book, the writing deals immediately with problems of daily life. It discusses one after the other the questions of eating, drinking, expensive furniture, music, dancing and other forms of amusement, banquets, laughter, ribaldry, gentlemanly behaviour, anointings, and wreaths, sleep, sexual intercourse, luxurious clothing, footwear, costly ornament—such are the subjects of the first book. It is significant that ethical exhortation and rules of politeness go hand in hand here, that Biblical proofs are to be found in closest combination with philosophical considerations and with typical Stoic references to what is in accordance with nature, and therefore to what is reasonable.

Simple foods are healthy, over-eating and drinking spoil digestion and make a man ill. The gluttony of rich epicures is contemptible, as also their insatiable search for new tit-bits. And if such a banquet, with its redolent meats and tasty ragouts, should be called a Christian agapē, that would be blasphemy against the logos. A distinction must be made between the feast of agapē and every other social meal, although such was instituted and esteemed by Christ Himself. We must use the gifts of food as if we were their masters, and not like slaves dependent on them. If we accept an invitation, we must partake of the foods that are offered, but always in moderation, without undue eagerness, and wait until it is our turn to be served. It is impolite and unreasonable to stand up and hold one's nose above the dishes in order to smell the odours, or to stir the foods with the hands, or to chew with the mouth full so that one's veins stand out in the head and sweat rolls down. One should also be careful not to soil the hands, the table-cloth, or the beard, not to speak with the mouth full, nor to eat and drink at the same time. Foods are also an evil in so far as their purpose is to tickle the appetite. A simple meal can

itself provide an attractive change. The middle way in all things is good, and not least in matters of the table: extremes are dangerous, the mean is good, but the mean is present where nothing essential is lacking, for the natural appetites find their limits in a satisfying moderation. In this doctrine, Moses and Plato are agreed.¹

Such examples enable us to perceive the style in which Clement wrote his Christian ethics: at the same time, it also shows for whom he was writing. Obviously it was not for Christians as such, but for the wealthy and educated amongst them, to whom luxuries of the table, of clothing, and of ornaments, provided daily seductions, and who associated with people to whom the style of living of the upper ten thousand in the rich commercial city of Alexandria, was an everyday matter. These were the same groups as those for whom he wrote his tractate on the rich young man, groups in whose ears the saying about the camel and the needle's eye had a sharp sound; they wished indeed to follow the Lord, but, to no greater extent than the rich young man, did they desire to sell their goods and give to the poor. Clement comforted them with the assurance that that was not to be understood literally. The Lord did not command them actually to dispose of their property, but not to let considerations of property dominate their hearts. He really commanded us to break the bonds forged by greed or anxiety in all their phases. Poverty itself did not bring one to God, and to give away one's goods made no one into a Christian. The decisive matter was the attitude of the soul. He who gave away his property but afterwards missed it regretfully and longed for it, had only suffered by his action. It was much better to possess enough for one's self, so as to be able not to worry, and to be in a position to help others. How could human society survive if no one had any property? Wealth rightly used was an aid to righteousness.²

In all the greater towns at the end of the second century, Christianity had penetrated into the upper classes; in Alexandria, this fact necessitated formulating a theology to deal with the question of the relationship between culture and Christianity: Clement did not hesitate to answer this question

¹ Clem., *Paed.*, 2,1-18

² Clem. *Quis dives salvetur*, 11-14

in a positive sense. The gnostics had acted similarly in various ways, but Clement was not at all inclined to modify the ethical requirements of religion in order to purchase the friendship of cultured people. Similarly, he gave away no ground to fanatical hatred of this world, nor to the cruder forms of asceticism which sometimes produced that hatred. Philosophers of the Stoic and Cynic schools had not seldom adopted drastic forms of denial of the world, and Clement had examples of this kind in mind. He affirmed the world and the forms of society as a field for the operation of Christian neighbourly love,¹ and felt it only desirable that the world, as an object of desire, should be banished from the soul: thereby, he came, as a Christian, to the same attitude as we have already noted in the most eminent Stoics. The only difference was that the coolness which formed the undertone of the latter's philosophy gave place to a warm-hearted love and a readiness to help in the service of God: and that difference was of critical importance. Thus the idea of a Christianization of the world was transferred from the spheres of apocalyptic fantasy, and brought into the region where historical forces were in operation.

The first two writings of the trilogy are exhortations, of which one is addressed to pagans and the other to Christians. The third was intended to be of didactic content dealing with Christian knowledge, and revelation. Clement had not the gifts adequate to writing such a work as this. He would have had to lay out his material quite logically, expound his leading ideas as to Christian doctrines in a systematic interconnection, and give a lucid account, down to the details. This he was unable to do, as he was not a systematic theologian. Proof of this is seen quite clearly in the two previous works. Splendid discussions of details, appropriate statements of the case, surprising connections, noble feelings voiced with masterly, rhetorical skill and applied to crucial points—he possessed all these accomplishments. But he was unable to bring together great masses of material in a perspicuous manner, and to arrange it with logical clarity. He delighted in the whole of the material which came his way, but he did not dominate it. For this reason, it was impossible for him to write the projected *Didaskalos*.

¹ *Ibid.*, 30–35

But in his case, necessity became a virtue. He was firmly convinced that, in the Holy Scriptures, the basic principle was carried through: the concealment of the final truths about divine things; and therefore that it was a duty of contemporary theologians to follow the same example, and to conceal the best and deepest things of knowledge, so that only the tireless searcher would be able to find them. The form of a learned compendium, such as the *Didaskalos* was intended to supply, was unsuitable for this purpose. For the extensive discussions which were to follow, he therefore chose the literary form of the *Stromateus*, i.e. "carpet", a form which was also more suited to his genius. The title was familiar amongst the sophists of the second period, and is similar to other titles usual at the time such as "The Meadow", "The Mountain of the Muses", "The Honeycomb", and the already mentioned "Banquets", and "Attic Nights". The idea conveyed was that the writing possessed a many-coloured content with most varied interests, and was presented in an attractive form and with charming variety. It was put forth in the light and entertaining style of a journalistic article, and the reader was intended to know that he was safe from the dryness of a pedantic scholar. All this was frequently the case, but, among the extant examples, some are not exactly to our taste.

This kind of writing was eminently suited, however, to Clement's literary style. It left him free from all the bonds of systematic treatment, and free to make effective use of his wide reading and his earnest type of thought, where and when and how it suited him; he passed from one thing to another, and, after long digressions, returned to the highway along which he was actually journeying. He brought confusion to a reader who, pen in hand, was endeavouring to trace the logical connection of his discussions; and he opened his heart only to one who had time to let him say all he had to say, who had patience to test the selection of material again and again, and who would search for the seeds of corn, the vein of gold, the nut kernels, and the glowing coals, which were cleverly concealed in the apparently confused medley of what Clement had to offer. His intention was to make it difficult for the reader to discover his deepest truths, and to frighten away the unelect

from visiting the sacred region. He expressly declared that that was his duty, because he must not throw the pearls of Christian truth before swine.¹ When we remember that, in the preface to his *Attic Nights*, Gellius² had similarly warned off the unelect from entering the mysteries of his learned medley, we perceive that such forms of expression belong to the style of this kind of literature, and were not intended to be taken too seriously in themselves. In Clement's case, however, he was treating the matter theologically and in earnest. Of course, he did not really conceal any secrets, but simply mingled the theological ideas, which were very dear to his heart, with a thousand other things and then handed the whole over to the reader to search them out for himself.

Moreover, these fundamental tendencies come out clearly from the crowd of discussions, when we consider the work as a whole. First, there is his defence of philosophy against the objection that it was of no value to Christians, but only endangered faith. This is the subject with which his book commences, the thesis that philosophy was given by God, and granted to the Greeks by divine providence.³ There was indeed only one truth, and that was to be identified with the revelation of the divine logos which took place through Christ: this truth could be grasped by faith without philosophy, indeed without any education. But, just as one and the same coin can be used, according to its economic purpose, both for paying a fare, or a tax, or rent, or a debt, or for buying an article, so truth could appear in the form of mathematics, or music, or philosophy. Hence, no individual case has room to exhibit all the functions of truth, any more than a single way of spending shows the whole function of a coinage; nevertheless the coin is good money, and, similarly, the truth is always genuine. Greek philosophy can therefore render important service to the Christian if he is anxious to use rational means to attain knowledge of the content of faith. Philosophy does not make Christian truth more true, but reveals the lack of content of the attacks directed against it on the part of sophists; it erects a protective wall for the vineyard of the Lord. The truth

¹ *Strom.* 1,18. 20 f. 55 f. 2,3,3—5. 4,4,1—3. 6,2,1. 7,110—111

² Gellius, *Noct. attic.*, Praef. 19—21

³ *Strom.* 1,18,4. 20,2

comprised in faith is bread necessary for life: philosophy is the jam which renders it more tasteful, and makes eating a pleasure. Its clarity helps in passing on the truth, its dialectic is a protection against heretical invasion.¹ Either tacitly, or expressed in an endless variety of ways, this point of view is to be found in all parts of the *Stromateis*, and the practical goal becomes quite plain, viz. to repulse heretics, understood, essentially, as gnostics. An entire book, the third, discusses their views of marriage, and their attitude to martyrdom is attacked in detail in the following book.

Two other purposes are most closely connected with those just mentioned: in attacking gnosticism, Clement defended the Old Testament, and brought the familiar thesis before philosophers that their wisdom was really borrowed from the Old Testament prophets. It follows naturally that he explained the sacred books in an allegorical manner, such as was practised by the Church from the first; and Clement possessed earlier commentaries on the Scriptures which he occasionally consulted. His surviving writings therefore contain numerous extracts explaining separate passages of the Bible, including some from a commentary on Pss. 17–19,² and, in more than one passage of the *Stromateis*, it is possible to detect the influence of this traditional scholarship. The very gnostics whom he attacked, preferred to make use of allegorical exegesis, and in particular they applied it, as usual, to the New Testament. Consequently, Clement was compelled to fight them with their own weapons, and, against their incalculable, arbitrary exegesis, he set his criterion of sound exegetical method, viz. the “Church’s canon”, the agreement of Law and prophets, combined with the legacy handed down to us by the appearance of Christ on earth.³ Hence, he approximated to the gnostic practice by recognizing allegory even for the New Testament: it was authoritatively justified by Christ’s parables. Moreover, in the discussion in the gospels about the purpose of speaking in parables (Matt. 13: 10–17), he found the basis of his favourite thesis, viz. that it was necessary to conceal the secrets of Christian knowledge from profane eyes. He liked to argue that, in both pagan cults and pagan philosophers, the same attitude

¹ *Strom.* 1,97–100; cf. 6,156

² Clement, *Elog.*, 42–64

³ *Strom.* 6,125,3

of secrecy was maintained in regard to final knowledge about the divine.¹

On almost every page, the *Stromateis* bears witness to his principles of scriptural exegesis: all his discussions are supported as much as possible by Bible passages, and allegory plays an important part in the process. Clement composed a special work of an exegetical character, the *Hypotypes*; it still survived at the time of Photios,² who indignantly asserted that, in addition to many justifiable views, it expressed doubtful and indeed blasphemous opinions, of which he reproduces a few. Most of the heresies which he regrets, appear to be exaggerations of genuine Clementine speculation, and, possibly, the book should be ascribed to the author's early period. Nevertheless, on account of its theological defects, the work was consigned to oblivion by the orthodox of a later date. Only tiny fragments of the original text have survived, together with an abbreviated and expurgated Latin translation of the commentary on the General Epistles.³ Here we find, on every page, that Clement is handing on numerous excerpts from the "presbyters", frequently in the form of anecdotes. In spite of occasional allegory, his exegesis was such that he brought out splendid religious teachings from the text; moreover, in so doing, he was frequently acting in a genuinely scientific manner. All this only confirms what the *Stromateis* abundantly testifies.

Nevertheless the *Stromateis*, at bottom and in main outline, describes the true gnostic—not the true gnosis. Clement readily accepts the slogan of the time and of his opponents, and is willing to become a gnostic himself and teach gnosticism, but a gnosticism proper to the Church⁴ and drawn from the Bible. We have already seen that, in the *Paidagogos*, he attacked the essential distinction between psychics who are only acquainted with faith, and pneumatists who possess knowledge. All baptized Christians possess the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless there is a difference between them which, however, is not based upon material differences but on the degree of effort one chose to make for higher perfection, i.e. differences of moral strenuousness. A pagan turns to Christianity and gains faith,

¹ *Ibid.* 5,32–66 ² *Supra*, p. 727 ³ Clement ed. Stählin 3,195–215 ⁴ *Strom.* 7,413

i.e. a "concise knowledge of what is most necessary". But the believer strives for gnosis, i.e. "an assured and trustworthy account of what is contained in faith, an account which is built on faith as derived from Christ's teaching, and which leads to an irrefragable and rational kind of understanding". This gnosis reaches its perfection in love, and leads towards the final completion in the promised vision of God, and this makes us similar to the angels.¹

As far as content goes, gnosis is nothing else than knowledge of God and, in Clement, has nothing to do with the fantastic speculations of a curiosity trying to find out details about all the secrets of the macrocosm or the microcosm. On the other hand and in particular, gnosticism is not rational comprehension of theological theses or exegetical truths. To possess gnosis implies an attitude to life, and to teach gnosis means to exhibit an example of Christian life. If philosophy had put the exemplar of the "sage" before mankind as the symbol of its work as educator, Clement worked out a new ideal of culture in the figure of a Christian gnostic, an ideal which he based on the Bible and philosophy. Gnosis was not a part of speculative philosophy or magical mysticism; rather it was ethics.

The Christian who had been conducted from an astonished admiration of nature to faith in God and His providence, would strive for a deeper understanding; and every step of progress increased his longing in as far as he "was successful in tasting the will of God". That experience raised him above the simple understanding of the plain believer, and he understood ever more perfectly what was the real meaning of the Ten Commandments in the deepest sense.² The prescriptions of the Law were completed by knowledge of the gospel.³ It was not sufficient to keep one's self far from evil—that was a matter of course for everyone—but also to keep one's self free from motives too dominant among simple believers,⁴ fear of punishment and hope of reward. The true gnostic had set aside all self-seeking and lived only in love for God as the clue to knowledge of Him. If it were possible to separate knowledge of God from eternal salvation and to permit the gnostic to choose between the two, he would choose knowledge of God without

¹ *Strom.* 7,55,1–7. 57,1–5. 149,8 ² *Ibid.* 7,60,1–4 ³ *Ibid.* 4,130,4 ⁴ *Ibid.* 7,21,2. 69,8

hesitation.¹ In this final surrender to God, he attained insight into the deepest connections between the world and the nature of man, between man's virtues and vices; and thereby he comprehended the absolute truth to which all Greek philosophy provided only the preparatory schooling.²

His objective was "to become like God" (he is fond of using this phrase which was current among the other Platonists), i.e. to re-attain the image of God proper to the Garden of Eden, or "to become God": i.e., in accordance with Ps. 82: 6, become equal with the angels who behold God's face; in other words, to share in the vision of God for which the gnostics yearned.³ This is brought into harmony with Pauline doctrine when we also find union with Christ mentioned as the goal, and when we learn that Christ as the image of God impresses his stamp on a gnostic in such a way that the latter now becomes the "third image" of God.⁴ By means of his knowledge, the gnostic opens heaven wide, marches among all the spiritual beings and hosts of angels, and reaches God's throne: Christ as high priest conducts him thither, and he speaks with God.⁵

The estrangement from the world, which is connected with progressive gnosis, is not necessarily expressed in an outer asceticism; not even celibacy is a necessary form of self-denial, although it is to be recommended in accordance with the Apostolic saying (1 Cor. 7: 38): the important matter is that the soul should abandon the tangible, and turn to the theoretic, i.e., to the spiritual values and the divine essence.⁶ The gnostic lives in an abiding fellowship with God, his life is a continual prayer, an endless festival day.⁷ Moreover, the reflection of this blessedness shines back on the earthly brethren in lasting kindliness, friendliness, and benevolence; and these convert the gnostic into a helper in all cases of bodily or spiritual need. At home and among friends, at Church and in one's calling, in joy and in sorrow, he sets the example of a noble conduct of life,⁸ and, in words reminiscent of Paul, Clement says⁹

¹ *Ibid.* 4,135 f.

² *Ibid.* 7,17,1-20,2

³ *Ibid.* 2,131,2-133,3; cf. Plato, *Laws*, 4 p. 716d. *Theaet.* p. 176a Clement, *Strom.*,

4,149,8. 148,1. 7,13,2-4. 56,6-57,1

⁴ *Strom.* 7,13,2. 16,6

⁵ *Ibid.* 7,82,5. 13,2

⁶ *Ibid.* 4,146,2-147,1. 7,36. 69,8-70,8

⁷ *Ibid.* 7,35-40. 49,3-8

⁸ *Ibid.* 7,16,4. 19,1. 36. 66,1. 67,4. 69 f.

⁹ *Hypolyp.* on *I John* 2,3. p. 212. Stählin, *Strom.*, 7,82,7

"The gnostic discharges all the unconditionally necessary duties: although a man who does such works is not a gnostic on that account. Nevertheless the works follow on gnosis like one's own shadow." Outwardly the difference between a faith-Christian and a Christian gnostic is but small and scarcely noticeable. The decisive advance made by the gnostic consists in his inner attitude, and, finally, in the conquest of self-seeking by means of a pure love of God.

Thus Clement had found the road which, in its further reaches, led to a mysticism based on Johannine conceptions: but he did not take it. He adopted the Apologists' conception of the logos without developing it further. In the *Hypotypes* expressions are to be found which suggest speculative formulas,¹ but they are incidental, and do not modify the general conceptions which meet our eyes in the principal extant works. In these, the logos is simply God in the act of revealing Himself; the logos has appeared in human form as Jesus Christ, and, even before his earthly life, had brought all truth to effect amongst Greeks and barbarians in the teachings of the philosophers and in the Old Testament; the logos was the principle of universal reason and, at the same time, the object of Christian faith. Clement gives us no theory of the relation of the logos to the Father or to the Holy Spirit, nor any doctrine in regard to the nature of Christ's humanity: Clement was not impelled by any necessity to attack these problems, because he had recognized more important matters which he then proceeded to discuss. He had no need to go into the other questions, because he did not acknowledge any real redemption by means of a sacramental transformation of mankind. The world of ideas as found in Irenæus remained altogether remote from him, as remote as the popular form of piety based on nature religion. He regarded redemption as belonging to the sphere of the ethical will, and the effective power was the logos as the leader, and as the giver of spiritual gifts.

Succeeding ages have not done justice to Clement, and the Church has paid him only small thanks for his outstanding contribution. It was his lot to be only the forerunner of a greater man who completely overshadowed him: the greater man was

¹ Clem., *Hypotyp.*, p. 210,5. 211,15 Stählin

Origen, the most outstanding teacher known in the Church of the east. For two centuries, the Church loved and honoured him fervently, but only to condemn him as a heretic a century later. When he was condemned by the Church, his influence was shattered, and, as a consequence it came about that, of the almost unbelievable multitude of his writings, only very few have survived in the original, and somewhat more in translation. His letters have disappeared, although these would have been most valuable for enabling us to understand his personality, but we must be grateful that at least a sketch of his life has been preserved in the sixth book of Eusebius's *History of the Church*.¹ Eusebius had collected the letters, and he was fond of making use of them along with other trustworthy sources.

It would appear that Origen was born A.D. 185; he was the eldest son in a large and probably prosperous Christian family; he was carefully educated, and, at an early date, showed uncommon gifts. When his father, Leonidas, was imprisoned during Severus's persecution, A.D. 202, the son, who was scarcely a full-grown man, conceived a passionate desire for martyrdom. His mother, in her concern, hid his clothes so that he could not leave the house. All he could do was to write and tell his father what she had done; he then exhorted him bravely to confess himself a Christian. Leonidas died as a Roman citizen, for he was executed by the sword: his possessions were confiscated. Thereupon an eminent lady took care of the highly gifted youth, and as a consequence he entered a house which vividly reflected the religious spirituality of the city. The lady had adopted as son, a gnostic named Paul who had been born in Antioch, who, on account of his recognized and outstanding talents, had many attentive hearers, whether gnostic or orthodox. Contact with this person greatly influenced Origen; at any rate he began to show himself actively opposed to what gnosticism stood for.

His excellent academic education now availed him for tutorial purposes, and he soon became financially independent. Since the Christian catechumen school had been broken up under pressure of the persecution, he acceded to the request of pagans who were anxious to learn, and gave instruction

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,1-8,6. 14,10-19,19. 23,1-2. 23,4-33. 36 f. 39,5. 7,1

in Christianity. He continued this work in spite of all hostile attacks, and all threats on the part of the police, and enjoyed increasing success. The school, conducted by the youth of scarcely eighteen years, was officially recognized by the bishop, and soon attended by such numbers that he was no longer in a position to continue both to give instruction in Christianity and to conduct the secular courses by which hitherto he had made his living. He abandoned the latter lectures and sold the library, which it had given him much pleasure to collect, in exchange for a current income of four obols a day, i.e. one denarius per week.¹ That was literally starvation pay, and during the next years Origen actually lived a life of strictest asceticism, carrying it through to the last extremes of need in regard to food and clothing, and by allowing himself insufficient sleep. This "philosophy" of his made a deep impression and gained imitators; it also converted educated pagans, who regarded Origen as combining the ideal of Cynicism with a living faith in God. Moreover Eusebius, our informant,² records, with justifiable pride, that six martyrs belonged to this stern school of the young teacher, martyrs who testified to their faith with their life. During this period of thorough-going asceticism, Origen followed literally the saying in Matt. 19: 12 and emasculated himself, an act which, in spite of all his care, did not remain secret in the end. Bishop Demetrius forgave him at the time but did not forget.

Eusebius also asserts that Origen had been a disciple of Clement who, on his part, had followed Pantainos as leader of the catechumen school. Whether the relationship of teacher and pupil, asserted by Eusebius, ever really existed is, however, by no means certain.³ In spite of all theological similarities Origen never mentions Clement, not even in passages where one might expect it. Origen may have attended Clement's lectures but did not enter into closer relationship with him. On the other hand, he remembered Pantainos with respect, and mentioned Ammonios Sakkas as his teacher in philosophy.⁴

We must not regard the famous "catechumen school" in any

¹ *Supra*, p. 22, and Wilcken, *Grundzüge*, 1, 1, LXVI

² Eus., *H.E.*, 6,4

³ J. Munck, *Unters. über Clemens*, 224 f. Alexander of Jerusalem in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,14,9

⁴ Origen in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,19,13 (cf. 19,5 f.)

way as a formally organized, teaching institution with appointed professors, but rather as voluntary lectures given by men who felt themselves called to do so, and who were willing to introduce others into the secrets of Christianity without being paid in cash. If the Church liked their work they would be officially recognized and recommended by the bishop. Origen was the first to begin something in the nature of an organization, in as far as he divided up the instruction, and handed over the introductory course to his friend Heraklas,¹ in order that he might be able to deal with the increasing crowds of pupils. Origen had made the acquaintance of Heraklas at the lectures of Ammonios, lectures which he had already been attending for five years when Origen first came. Ammonios, who had developed from a porter into a philosopher, dominated men's minds at that time with his doctrine based on Plato; and he founded a school which produced the two greatest thinkers of late Greek antiquity: Origen the Christian and Plotinus the classical exponent of Neoplatonism.

Origen was the first Christian of whom any record has survived that he had a close personal contact with the known head of a philosophical school, and the philosophers did not overlook the matter. Porphyry records that as a young man he had met the famous Origen, the pupil of Ammonios; that Ammonios had abandoned the Christianity inherited from his parents; that Origen, although a Christian in his mode of life, became a Greek in his doctrine about God and material things; and that his studies were continually applied to Plato, the Neoplatonists, and the Pythagoreans.² Origen's writings confirm these notices. His studies under Ammonios were actually of the greatest importance to him because they gave him a scholarly knowledge of the methods, and the entire mode of feeling and thought, which passed as modern learning at the beginning of the third century. A good idea of this is given by an excerpt which has fortunately been preserved from the Platonizing dogmatics of Albinos,³ an excerpt in the form of a

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,15

² Porphyry in Eus., *H.E.*, 6,19,5-8

³ Albinos, *Eisagoge in Plato, opera*, ed. C. F. Hermann, 6,152-189. Also Hal Koch, *Pronoia u. Paideusis*, p. 243-68

simple compendium and of systematic definitions; it shows how Plato was understood in the Antonine period. If, in addition, we take note of scattered records in regard to Numenios, "the Neopythagorean", a Syrian of Apamea, we shall find a valuable supplement on the religious side. This last had been so influenced by Jewish philosophy of religion, probably by Philo in the first instance, that he even found it possible to accept and teach the thesis that Plato was a "Moses speaking Attic Greek". This thesis greatly influenced Christian thought.¹

As early as Plutarch, it is possible to detect most of the characteristic signs of this "middle Platonism": the increased elevation of God above the present world and its material character, and, in connexion therewith, an inclination to fantastic developments of the conceptions of daemonic intermediate beings, conceptions already present in Plato; detailed discussion of the problem of divine providence and divine righteousness; the assertion of the immortality and personal responsibility of the soul; the doctrine of its share in the divine being, and occasional traces of a mystical tendency. Ethics are developed under Platonic influences: "to become as similar as possible to God." Allegorical exegesis was frequently employed to support one's own philosophical ideas by Plato's words, and especially by religious myths and sayings of poets and thinkers of the earlier ages. Side by side with every effort made to develop a pure, Platonic tradition, the methods and the doctrinal principles of Aristotelians and Stoics were adopted indifferently, because these schools were felt to be on the same side against the negatives of the Sceptics and the atheism of Epicurus. We have already noted that the Apologists were bound by this type of ideas. Thanks to his higher education, Clement was strongly under the same influence and he increased it by a diligent study of Plato. Nevertheless, Origen was the first to enter into the genuine tradition of the Platonic school, and both his intake and his output fully reflect the Platonic heritage which was alive in his day, and which was of increasing influence.²

The fame of Origen, as a scholar who was mastering all

¹ Clement, *Strom.*, 1, 150, 4. Eus., *Praef. ev.*, 11, 10, 14 (7)

² Hal Koch, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-304

departments of learning, spread far and wide, and attracted even heretics and pagan philosophers to the scene of his labours. The conversion of Ambrosius, a Valentinian, had some personal importance for him. Ambrosius was a wealthy man and possessed means to enable Origen, whom he honoured enthusiastically, to enter on literary activity without any essential change of his methods of work. To the scholars round about Alexandria the writing of books was by no means a natural consequence of their calling: their duty was to deliver oral lectures, and men like Ammonias Sakkas, Plotinus, and Epictetus, left no writings of their own. This state of affairs was sanctified by the classical instance of Socrates, and it is only due to the subsequent writings of Arrian and Porphyry that we have any detailed information in regard to the teachings of Epictetus and of Plotinus. Ambrosius placed seven or more stenographers, writing in rotation, in Origen's lecture room. His lectures were thus given written form, and eventually published as books.¹ Ambrosius was in fact successful in giving permanence to Origen's life-work in an almost unbelievable number of writings.

Before we proceed to discuss them, however, let us first take note of the further details of his outer life as recorded in Eusebius. During the time of pope Zephyrinus, he was in Rome for a short stay, and afterwards visited the imperial governor of Arabia at the latter's request. The fearful massacres in Alexandria, ordered in his pathological conceit by Caracalla in A.D. 215, caused Origen to leave the city. He went to Cæsarea, and, at the request of Theoktistos, bishop of the city, and of Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, he gave Biblical lectures for the benefit of the Church. This leaving of the sphere of scholarship and entering into that of church life was, however, displeasing to the bishop of Alexandria, who advised him urgently to return home at once. Origen obeyed.

Fifteen years later, when he touched at Cæsarea while on a journey to Greece, his two episcopal friends there ordained him as presbyter. Such a consecration in a strange diocese was unusual, and the ordination of a eunuch offended widespread opinions. At an Alexandrian synod, Demetrius refused to

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 18, 1. 23, 1 f.

recognize his status as presbyter, and expelled him from the city. The office of teacher was taken from him and transferred to his colleague, Heraklas, who shortly afterwards became Demetrius's successor in the diocese. Origen removed in the year 230–31 to Cæsarea, where he continued his customary teaching work with undiminished success.¹ From that centre, he made many journeys, and on two occasions was invited to Arabia as theological arbitrator. Here he held a debate with Beryllos, bishop of Bostra, who was inclined to Monarchianism, and was successful in "leading him back to the sound views which he had formerly held". When the persecution broke out under Decius the fatal hour struck in which Origen, the teacher and panegyrist of martyrdom, was to make his own confession. He was cruelly tortured, and, in letters which he wrote from prison, but which are not extant, he showed his unquenchable courage and the soul-stirring witness which he bore. Every attempt was made to avoid killing such a celebrated person; but his physical strength failed, and soon afterwards, in A.D. 253–54, Origen died at Tyre at the age of 69. His grave was pointed out to visitors there for many years afterwards.²

Origen's literary remains were taken care of by admiring friends from an early date. We have already spoken of Ambrosius. Towards the end of the century, Pamphilus the presbyter, who had been a teacher at the school in Cæsarea, collected Origen's writings from all quarters, and copied them out with his own hand. His zeal preserved the lists found in Eusebius and Jerome, in regard to the works available in Cæsarea.³ In every case, the foremost position is occupied by the scriptural commentaries, and these deal with all the books of the Old and New Testaments; they are partly in the form of scholarly exegesis splendidly planned, partly in the form of homilies, or rather Bible studies, in the church at Cæsarea—all these works having been done in the last nine years of his life.⁴ The original text is extant of parts of the commentaries on Matthew and on John, together with sermons on the witch

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 14, 10, 19, 15–19, 23–24, 26; cf. Photios, *Bibl. Cod.*, 118

² Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 33, 1–3, 37, 39, 5, 7, 1 (also Schwartz, vol. 3, 38) Photios, *Cod.*, 118; Jer., *vir. int.*, 45; and Holl on Epiphanius, *haer.*, 64, 3, 3

³ Eus., *H.E.*, 6, 24, 28, 32. Jerome, *Vir. int.*, 75; *Epist.* 33, 34, 1

⁴ Eus., *H.E.*, 36, 1

of Endor, and fragments on Jeremiah: to these must be added numerous small fragments relative to all the Biblical books in the Byzantine symposium known as the *Catenæ*. Then we must take account of the Latin translations made by Rufinus, who laboured about A.D. 400, but who unfortunately did not hesitate to transform and to "purify" numerous series of sermons on the Old Testament, commentaries on the Song of Songs and on Romans, all in Latin; Jerome has preserved for us a Latin translation of selected homilies on Luke. Origen's defence of Christianity against the attacks of Celsus the Platonist is extant complete in eight books: like the commentary on Matthew, the work was written in the last period of Origen's life.¹ The ten books of the *Stromateis*, now lost, were written in the Alexandrian period, and the title shows that he intended the work to be parallel to that of Clement. "In this work, he compared the teachings of Christians and philosophers with one another, and demonstrated all the principles of our religion from Plato, Aristotle, Numenios, and Cornutus."²

On the other hand, the main work of the earlier period, consisting of four books of "bases" (*Peri Archōn*), has been preserved fairly completely. Rufinus translated the whole, and expurgated dubious sayings here and there: but Jerome, his critic, put his finger on these corrections and wrote to a friend in regard to all the passages felt to be objectionable.³ Hence it is possible to compare both texts, and to restore the sense intended by Origen. Finally large portions of the third and fourth books have been preserved in the original form. This work was the first Christian system of theology, the first bold attempt to combine Christian pronouncements about God, the world, and man, in a closely-knit, and strictly logical, system of doctrine, and it stands in majestic isolation in the history of the early Church. No theologian of the east, and none of the west, dared to attempt again this immense task. Their own scholarship was devoted to single issues, and their compositions were not more learned than was necessary for instruction appropriate to catechumens: that is the case also in

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, 6,36,2

² Jerome, *Epist.*, 70,4,3; Eus., *H.E.*, 6,24,3

³ Jerome, *Epist.*, 124; cf. Koetschau in his edition of Origen's *de princ.* pp. lxxxviii ff.

regard to Theodoret's fifth book of *Fables of the Heretics* and Augustine's book on Christian doctrine. John of Damascus was the first to attempt something more ambitious than this in his *Source of Knowledge*, and in fact he was successful: it is a collection of the doctrinal traditions as recognized by the Greek Church, c. A.D. 750, and is systematically arranged and comprehensive, a learned museum, but not an organism born of the stress of life.

For our purpose, we may disregard Origen's smaller writings, but one more work must be mentioned which shows his systematizing cast of mind, and is of the highest significance for understanding his methods, viz. his great work on the Bible. When studying the Old Testament, Origen even took account of Jewish exegesis, and sought the advice of Jewish scholars; probably also he attempted to learn Hebrew. In this, however, he scarcely went beyond the alphabet, since his writings reveal no real knowledge of the language.¹ Hence he remained uncertain whenever the wording or meaning of the original text or its relation to the Church's translation of the Septuagint was questionable; the uncertainty was particularly great in discussions with the Jews. He discovered another means of approaching more closely to the original text, and compelling it to disclose the final secrets of divine revelation. He began to assemble all the extant Greek translations of the Old Testament, and, by diligent search, he was successful in obtaining not only the translations of Aquila, Symmachos, and Theodotion, which were in widespread use, but also in discovering two other translations of the Psalms by unknown authors. At this point he undertook an immense task, which indeed could only be carried out by means of Ambrosius's wealth. Using six parallel columns, he wrote side by side: the Hebrew original text in Hebrew, i.e. unvocalized, characters, the Hebrew original text in Greek letters in order to fix the pronunciation, and then he gave a column each to the translations of Aquila, Symmachos, the Septuagint, and Theodotion. The lines were quite short: in the Hebrew text, as a rule, the words stood under one another

¹ Harnack, *D. kirchengesch. Ertrag d. exeg. Arbeiten des Orig.*, 1,22–30 (*Texte u. Unters.* 42,3). Wutz, *Onomastica sacra*, 1,96 (*Texte u. Unters.* 41). Eus., *H.E.*, 6,16,1. Origen, *epist. ad Afric.*, 7 (17,28 Lo.); *In psalt.* (11,352 Lo.); *de princ.* 1,3,4. 4,3,14. Jerome, *adv. Rufin.*, 1,13

in a column, and the lines of the translations were arranged correspondingly: it was possible to tell at a glance how each translator had reproduced the Hebrew word. Owing to the six columns, it was called The *Hexapla*, i.e. the six-fold Bible, but in the Psalms, other columns were added for a fifth, sixth, and, in parts indeed, a seventh translation.

The whole must have been a gigantic work consisting of several dozen great folios, and it is scarcely possible that there can have been more than a single copy of the whole. Only in regard to isolated parts were copies made of selected groups of columns, and a few remains of such manuscripts have survived. For the general use of scholars, Origen edited, and the library at Cæsarea published, special editions of the text of the Septuagint, editions which contained in the margin Origen's most important results of the comparison of parallels. The verses and words lacking in the original Hebrew text were indicated by a mark (*obelos* ÷). If on the other hand the LXX omitted portions of the text which were present in the Hebrew, this was to be found in the text in its place after another translation, but indicated by a preceding star (*asteriskos* *). In addition, the most important variations found in Aquila, Symmachos, and Theodotion were written in the margin at the appropriate places, so that the student quickly obtained a clear oversight of the facts. At a later date, Pamphilus, whom we have already mentioned, and his friend Eusebius were zealous in publishing these "hexapla editions" of the LXX, and libraries still preserve numerous manuscripts based on such copies.¹ Origen's gigantic number of writings must not be permitted to hide it from us that his real life's work did not consist of writing, but of oral instruction, i.e., that his books were only notes, taken down by others, of his spoken teaching. Every estimate of his personality must start with this fact. It is a very fortunate matter that we possess a detailed description of his way of teaching and of its methodological development. The description is to be found in a speech by a grateful pupil, Gregory, afterwards bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus, a speech which he delivered before his fellow students and their teacher, when departing from the

¹ H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the O.T. in Gk.*, 3rd edit., and thereon *Götting. Gel. Anzeigen*, 1902, 329–38

school at Cæsarea.¹ Here we find, admittedly, mighty waves of rhetoric occasioned by his grateful thanks and genuine emotion. Nevertheless, we can see the facts in all desirable clarity. A regular *Protreptikos* to philosophy as the highest art formed the commencement of study, an art which, alone and in itself, could make the student a genuine thinker, and which alone rendered possible the true service of God. It is significant that Gregory acknowledges that, at first, he was rebellious, but that he was not only overcome by the compelling arguments, but also bound in unbreakable chains by the charm and friendliness of the great teacher. Then a preliminary course of instruction began which employed the Socratic method in examining the mental quality and practical ability of each individual, and which, by continual training in the art of thinking, rendered him apt for academic education. This latter began with logic and dialectic, followed by natural science with geometry and astrology. The crown of the building erected on this foundation consisted of ethics and theology. The study of ethics was by no means confined to a merely rational discussion of moral problems; rather it consisted essentially in the discipline of the soul for the practical realization of philosophic virtue—and, in this very respect again, Origen appeared as an illuminating example because his own way of life corresponded perfectly with the words of his teaching.

The study of theology began with an extended review of all accessible philosophers and poets. Their opinions about the godhead were described, compared with one another, and examined for their content of truth; only the atheistic writers were excluded from the review as useless, indeed hurtful. He taught his listeners, however, to discover the final truth in the place where God spoke through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. He was a true exponent of Scripture, whether he was explaining difficult passages or finding a deep meaning in simple words, because he was filled with the same divine spirit as had spoken in the prophets. Thus all wisdom came to a climax in the knowledge of God, and this was based on the Bible.

¹ *Gregorios Thaumaturgos' Dankrede*, ed. by P. Koetschau (G. Krügers Sammlung 9); thereon A. Brinkmann in *Rhein. Museum N.F.* 56, 55–76

The sketch is drawn with obvious faithfulness: the system of instruction corresponded to the traditions of philosophic schools with a modern tendency, and depicts Origen's theological quality in a manner confirmed by his writings. The intermingling of philosophy and the Bible gave rise to the system which is described in detail in the work *Peri Archōn* which Origen had written in early manhood. The title is probably intentionally ambiguous as it can be translated either "on basic principles" or "on primordial matters". He placed the greatest importance on finding Scriptural references for all the doctrinal principles he put forward, and he was successful because the forms of thought for which he sought were actually present in high degree in the late Jewish world as well as in that of the New Testament, and they only required putting together systematically. But the total picture of the constitution of the universe, a picture into which he interwove the Biblical elements, arose from the philosophy of "middle" Platonism.

In so doing, Origen was the first to accomplish the task that all the later, systematic theologians set themselves to do, viz. to present a Christian view of the world in harmony with the educated opinion of the era. Origen's system was impressively complete, and gave a clear insight into the leading principles. His foundations were the conceptions, familiar from the days of the apologists, in regard to God, the logos, providence, and freedom of the will as found in spiritual beings: the eternal drama of the world was the consequence of their interaction. God, the final unity, the original source of all existence, was incomprehensible and inconceivable to human thought alone: it was only possible for us to make negative or indirect pronouncements about Him, apart from recognizing His omnipotence. Of these pronouncements the first, and, for Origen, the most important, was the genuinely Platonic assertion of His incorporeality: an assertion which contradicted not only Stoic views, but also the vulgar ideas of the laity.¹ But the positive understanding that God was the final cause of all creation was transformed into the striking view of the absolute goodness of God, who created living things because He wished to manifest goodness to them. Moreover, since God's will was

¹ *de princ.* 1,1,1-5; cf. Hal Koch, *op. cit.*, 20 f.

part of His being and therefore eternal, it followed of necessity that the created world was eternal.¹

A peculiarity of Origen's mode of thought has now become clear, and it is indispensable for understanding his system. He taught that the conception of time was not applicable to God or the divine, and that, in addition to the horizontal division of phenomena in a temporal sequence, there was a vertical division which took account of a series of causes and effects apart from the conception of time.² Hence the Son of God was eternally begotten by the Father just as radiance is always produced by a light—a Platonist would say as an eternally necessary effect of the eternal cause, but Origen preferred to use Biblical language in accordance with Heb. 1: 3. The Son was therefore of the same nature as the Father, because he was born of God and not created out of nothingness.³ He proceeded from the Father without diminishing the Father's essence, in the way that will is produced by the Spirit: but the Son was an independent person, and could be described as a "second God" subordinate to the Father.⁴ Moreover, the Son was the "mediator" between God and the world. In the first place, He was mediator as regards the world, since all things were created by Him. But He was also mediator in the opposite sense, as it was only through Him that knowledge of the Father was possible to created beings: only to the extent that we know the Son do we know God, and our knowledge is therefore always merely relative, and can never be absolute.⁵

Whereas the conception of a logos who was also the Son corresponded to the current Platonic view of the world, knowledge of the third divine person, the Holy Spirit, could only be obtained from the Bible. Origen laid emphasis on this point, and then began to weave into his system a teaching appropriate to the words of Scripture. The Spirit proceeded from the Son as the Son from the Father, and so constituted the third stage in the unfoldings of the godhead. The activity of the Father comprehended the whole, that of the Son was limited to rational beings, the Holy Spirit came to effect only in the saints.

¹ *de princ.* 4,4,8. 1,2,10. 1,4,3. p. 65 with footnote

² Cf. *de princ.* 1,2,2. p. 29,14

³ *de princ.* 1,2,4—7. p. 33 with footnote on p. 37

⁴ c. *Cels.* 5,39. 7,57

⁵ *de princ.* 1,2. 6 f. 13. pp. 35—37. 46 and footnote

All three persons, however, constituted the one incorporeal Godhead as distinct from the created world.¹ It is clear that Origen was endeavouring consciously to give a systematic foundation to the doctrine held by the Church, a foundation which cannot, however, be brought into organic connection with that doctrine.

On the other hand, an immediate and illuminating consequence, flowing from the fundamental, divine property of goodness and benevolence, was the necessity of creating a universe as the object of the divine love. The universe consisted, it is true, of an inconceivably large, but nevertheless not infinite, number of rational beings, the kernel of whose existence was constituted by the fact that they shared the eternal nature of the divine light. Thus, at bottom, despite all the difference between creature and creator, their nature was "of one essence" (*homoousioi*) with the godhead; in other words, it was related in a certain sense to God, and hence was immortal.² On this point, Origen shared the gnostic view about the divine spark in man. Nevertheless, all men had free will, and accordingly they could shape their own course of life. The result was the manifold variety of the world, with all its contradictions and degrees of development. The providence of God maintained, in perfect order and balanced equilibrium, the interaction of the whole which man could not conceive nor comprehend; and, in spite of unconditional freedom of the will in the individual, God carried out His universal plan for training everyone in preparation for returning to the Father's house. This standpoint enabled Origen to speak of God's logos as the soul of the world,³ just as did the philosophers.

The freedom of the will was made the excuse by all created beings to turn aside from God, and to reach out towards what was anti-godly, i.e., evil, and this, again,⁴ was also the "non-existent". This fall into sin was of smaller or greater degree, and decided their future fate. By their very nature, their original beauty consisted of the divine reason, *nous*. Now their fervour cooled; they became "souls"—*psyche* meaning soul, a

¹ *Op. cit.*, I,3,I. 5. 8. p. 55 with footnote

² *de princ.* 2,9,I. 4,4,9 pp. 362 ff. with footnote

³ *Ibid.* 2,1,3

⁴ *Ibid.* 2,9,2. p. 166,2; in *John* 2,13,94 p. 69.6

word which Origen derived from *psychein*, to cool.¹ They received bodies consisting of matter, and the further the cooling went which estranged them from God, i.e. the more their own will came into opposition with God, the grosser became the material and the more repugnant the bodily form. From the resplendent spheres of the heavenly stars, through the aethereal figures of the spiritual realm, to mankind on earth in their varied races and multitudinous circumstances, finally down to the daemons and devils of the underworld, we see or guess the manifold variety of bodily forms. On the other hand, according to its degree of moral development, an individual soul either makes its way upward to finer shapes, or is condemned to punishment even in an animal body. For redeemed inhabitants of hell, our earth is a heaven, but to beings who have fallen from heaven it must appear a hell. Origen succeeded in providing a Biblical basis for this Platonic and Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis.²

The ascent and descent made by human souls was not due to the play of blind chance, no matter how often it might appear like it from the earthly point of view; but was governed throughout by God's providence, and moved towards a definite goal. That could not happen compulsorily, because souls were by nature free. Hence God chose the method of training by teaching, and, since the inmost kernel of all rational beings was divine, He was assured of the final effectiveness of His appeal to their original ethical goodness. Wherever God's might and providence became visible in the world-process and in the laws of nature, the logos called the human soul to recognize God, and, to a large extent, the philosophers had obeyed this call. Nevertheless, all including Plato, who was the best amongst them, had come to a halt before the last gate. None had shaken off the remnants of polytheism, and confessed a pure worship of God.³ Nor were all combined able to deliver men from their sins, and to convert them to a virtuous life: and that is what was important in the end.⁴ On the other hand, God had granted the Jewish race a special revelation, in as far as he trained them by

¹ *de princ.* 2,8,3 p. 157 with footnote

² *Ibid.* 1,4,1 (p. 64 with footnote). 1,7,1. 1,8,4 (pp. 102 ff. with footnote). 2,9,3.

3,5,4. 4,3,11 (pp. 273 ff., p. 339 with footnote)

³ *Contra Celsum* 6,3–5. *de princ.* 4,1,1

⁴ *c. Cels.* 3,60 f.

the legal prescriptions of Moses and the preaching of the prophets, and placed before their eyes prophecies which promised bliss. At the same time, the writings of these men, as brought together in the Old Testament, concealed a deeper sense, which, though occasionally glimpsed at an earlier date, became increasingly plain to the student who was a seeker after God, and who lived in days when prophecy had been fulfilled.¹

The incarnation of the logos was the decisive act in the redemption of groaning creatures (cf. Rom. 8: 22). The Son of God appeared on earth by uniting Himself with a human soul, which, as distinct from all others, never swerved in its complete self-giving to God. This soul was the mediating link between the godhead and the corporeal nature of mankind, and its unchangeable harmony with the divine will brought about the unity of the person of the God-man. In this union with the logos, however, the humanity of Jesus became ever more divine, until, after the Resurrection, the material corporeality disappeared, and the soul became one with the logos in a manner which we are not able to imagine. Thus the way was opened up, along which all rational creatures, including mankind in particular, would find redemption. Christians were men whose souls were possessed by the same pure love of God, as the soul of their Master; and who, filled by the same power of the logos, strove to attain the same dematerialization and deification as had been actualized in Christ: new companies of Christs were continually being formed, and they followed the one Christ from this earth to heaven.²

It is clear that, according to this view, no real soteriological significance can be ascribed to Christ's death on the cross; and, as a matter of fact, Origen often explicitly declares that, for perfect Christians, only the logos, who imparted knowledge, was relevant. At this point, however, he made use of an idea familiar from the time of Clement, an idea in which a difference was concealed between a lower but thoroughly legitimate stage of faith, as found in simple members of the Church on the one hand, and, on the other, the knowledge possessed by those

¹ *Ibid.* 5,31. 7,7. *de princ.* 4,3,9–14

² *de princ.* 2,6,3; in *Matt. comm. ser.* 33 p. 61,7. *Hom. in Jer.* 15,6 p. 130,15 ff.; *c. Cels.* 3,41 p. 237,7 ff.; *de princ.* 2,3,3 p. 117. 3,5,6 p. 277; *c. Cels.* 6,79 p. 150

who had reached an advanced stage. Sinners required the physician. But it was plain that, when Jesus was crucified, He had defeated the daemons. This victory helped the man who lingered at the stage of naïve faith, because it gave him the tangible certainty of a newly-gained salvation and a real forgiveness of sins;¹ the reason was in the vicarious sacrificial death of the Lord for the sins of the world, and particularly in His outwitting of the devil. In this way, Origen introduced the historical event and its Biblical presentation into his system, without transforming the main outline of the latter. He used this device ever and again, both in large matters and in detail. He also made room for the sacraments—but the path he took always led unerringly towards the goal of deification through the logos. No matter how frequently or profoundly he examined ecclesiastical doctrines, Biblical questions, and philosophical problems, he did it as a scholar with clear understanding, calm judgment, and objective interest.

Most deeply of all, however, there glowed a fire, like the yearning of a man who could no longer tolerate a mediocre life confined to the valleys, but who was irresistibly drawn towards the pure and calm stillness of the snow-capped mountain-tops, where one forgets to look at the earth, but stretches one's hands towards the stars. Thus the present earth, the present time, the present world, sank away from Origen the thinker. The man who had gained Christ was freed from matter and sin; he had no need to fear that, after death, he would fall into the pains of Hell, premonitions of which already burned in his conscience. He would rise again out of the grave with a spiritual body composed of heavenly glory, and a soul fired by the logos, a soul which thirsted for ever higher knowledge. A "heavenly Jerusalem" was granted to such persons even on the present earth, a "school for souls" where they would comprehend the connection of all earthly things: the enigma of mankind, his soul, and his *nous*, would be solved there, and men would understand the work of the spirit, and penetrate into the secrets of the Mosaic law. Moreover, the secret powers of medicinal plants would become plain to them, as plain as the

¹ *c. Cels.* 3,62 p. 256,8; *comm. in John* 1,107. 124 pp. 23, 25. Hal Koch. *op. cit.*, 87 f.

authority of the fallen angels to seduce mankind. What seemed like coincidence here on earth would appear as a just decree of divine providence, and men would learn how God numbered the hairs of every human head, and cared for the two sparrows which cost only a farthing, as in the gospel.

The soul did not remain here below. It mounted into the upper air, and searched out the secrets thereof. Then the heavens opened before it, and it moved towards Jesus by passing from sphere to sphere. The nature of the stars, their constellations, their paths, and the heavenly equilibrium, now became open to its gaze. The way led higher up into the regions of the invisible: the soul became more and more spiritualized, and grew to perfect knowledge until at last it was no longer soul, but wholly *nous* and spirit, and was able to behold "face to face", the world of intelligible being and essence. That was the way towards likeness to God which was dreamed of by philosophers as the highest good, but granted to Christians in order that they might rise from their present bodily condition, and reach pure *nous*, the "glory of the sons of God when God is all in all", for purified beings no longer feel or conceive anything else than God alone.¹

Only a few elect souls reach this, the highest goal. The millions on earth struggle with error and evil, and the spirits in Hell strive against God. But since all formerly proceeded from God, none can finally be abandoned by God. His call will sound ever anew in their ears; they will trace His guidance in their lives, feel His parental hand in their suffering and need, a hand which will not abandon even the last creatures of all in the deepest regions of Hell. One after the other will be seized, accept conversion, mount slowly upwards joined by increasing numbers, and, after inconceivable periods of time, the day will come when none will remain outside, and when even the prince of Hell will return to God.² Then the "return of the whole" will be completed, the purpose and meaning of the historical process fulfilled, death abolished, and Christ will place everything, in himself and with himself, at God's feet "in order that God might be all in all".

Even yet Origen was not content: his eye sought to see

¹ *de princ.* 2,10,4. 11,3-7. 3,6,1. 3

² *Ibid.* 1,6,3 p. 83 with footnote

eternity beyond the mere infinitude of this world and its temporality. The present course of history, from the first Fall of man through the immense periods of time to the return home of the lost, and until the blessed final perfection, was nevertheless only one event among many, one period of the universe which had been preceded by others, and would be similarly followed. The will of individual creatures remained eternally free, and always lured to another Fall, and this automatically brought about the further consequences, and introduced a new period of decline towards what was material. But the love of God also remained eternal, and gave rise in Him to merciful compassion, and thus to watching over and educating the world. Once more there would arise the duel between the obstinacy of the creature and the redemptive work of the logos, until even this drama reached its conclusion, and God once more gathered all to Himself, for nothing could be eternally lost.¹ Thus Origen the seer sees, in the light of eternity, the endless series of God's worlds.

It is clear that this "system" presents a Christian gnosticism approximating to perfection, and that, like Clement, it was influenced by gnostic views outside the Church. It is also clear that it made large use of material and forms of thought current in contemporary philosophy. Nevertheless it would be a grievous mistake to regard Origen as a philosopher with a purely intellectual orientation. The philosophers of the time were only seldom men of pure intellect; the gnostics were never of that kind, and Origen felt himself to be a Christian, and philosophy was, to him, only a means to that end. In his great apology against Celsus the Platonist, he made quite plain how much he had in common with the philosophy of his opponent—no small amount²—and he showed where the important differences were to be found: that was the crucial matter to him. The differences were determined by his adherence to the Bible and to the doctrine of the Church, and by the manner of his life as thus determined for him.

Moreover, it must be granted that the simple faith, found in popular and crude forms in the Church, was often abandoned,

¹ *de princ.* 3,5,3–5 pp. 273–76 with footnote

² A. Miura-Stange, *Celsus u. Origenes* (*Beih. z. ZNW.*, no. 4, 1926)

and the only conception of Christianity that remained alive, was one which developed into gnosticism. This corresponded in other respects, however, to Origen's view of the relation between faith and knowledge. To him, the superiority of the completely spiritualized form of his religion was so obvious that he rarely discussed the subject.¹ He regarded faith by no means as a simple antithesis to knowledge. He used to speak also of a "genuine faith" which was a gift of God's grace, which grasped the truth with a more certain judgment, and which understood the deeper sense placed within the Bible by the Holy Spirit.² Even Gregory, in his farewell speech, stressed the fact that all the scholarly labour of Origen's school issued in Bible study, a pronouncement confirmed by Origen's life's work as seen in the multitude of commentaries, homilies, and scholia. Even the last book of the *Peri Archōn* contains theoretic discussions on the necessity of allegorical methods.

Anyone who seeks to understand Origen's heart must watch him as a Bible student. It was in the Bible and here alone, that the way to knowledge opened out for a Christian; here spoke the Lord through His holy spirit to the spirit which had taken up a dwelling in man: and, without the revelation of the logos, it was simply impossible to enter into God's presence. Origen used to lift his hands in prayer when he was struggling to find a right meaning, and he felt the kiss of the lips of the logos when a divine secret was revealed to him apart from worldly learning;³ but he always worked on the basis of academic principles and, as is shown by the case of the Hexapla, he carried out serious philological work in a most extensive measure, and developed a method of allegorical exegesis carefully thought out, and based on the Alexandrian tradition.⁴ His commentary on the Gospel of John proves how his methods of work could maintain their place in face of the gnostic methods of Herakleon the Valentinian. His work became the model for Biblical exegesis as practised in the entire Greek Church. Copied out and imitated, it held good from century to century,

¹ W. Völker, *D. Vollkommenheitsideal d. Orig.* (*Beiträge z. histor. Theol.* 7, 1931) pp. 77 ff.

² *Comm. in John.* 10, 43, 298–300 p. 221. 20, 32, 284–86 p. 369

³ *Comm. in Cant. prol.* p. 63, 26 lib. I p. 91 f.; cf. *Comm. in Matt.* 15, 30 (3, 392 Lo.)

⁴ *de princ.* 4, 3, 3–9

long after his theology had been condemned. His Bible commentaries still reveal, therefore, many aspects of his religious life and theological thought, aspects re-appearing in his principal, systematic works: we have already taken the opportunity of making the same observation when discussing his Christology.

We mount step by step in our knowledge of God, but each step is Christ: we first understand Him as man, then as angel and heavenly being; first as way, then as door; first as Lord and shepherd, then as king; first is He the lamb who takes away our sin, then His flesh becomes our real food: but in this way, and only in this way, do we come to knowledge of the Father.¹ In the Commentary on Canticles, we hear of three stages: on the first, we exercise ourselves in keeping the Commandments and in the moral life; on the second, we deny the world and its vanity; the third is characterized by longing for the sight of the invisible and the eternal: this yearning is satisfied when God's mercy fires the soul to love the beauty of the logos, and when the logos responds to this love.² We find a detailed description of the ascent towards knowledge in the exegesis of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness;³ and, when explaining the names of places, Origen endeavours to find an indication of the way by which the soul moves towards God, "whether it is the journey out of this world into the future æon, or whether the soul's conversion from the errors of life to virtue and the knowledge of God."⁴

It follows that Origen held that the education of the human race conducted by God's providence only proceeded slowly and step by step, and that he made use of metaphors, and, occasionally, even of terms, which were taken over by mystics of a later date and filled with a new content. We must beware, however, of understanding Origen himself in a mystic sense: the idea of a dissolution of the soul in God was as foreign to him as that of the union of God with a creature. Moreover, a right understanding of the relevant passages proves that visions and ecstasy were never elements of his personal religion.⁴

¹ *Comm. in John.* 19,6,35–39 p. 305

² *Comm. in Cant.* prol. p. 79,12 ff.

³ *Hom. in Numeri* 27,9 ff. p. 268

⁴ Hal Koch, *op. cit.*, 333–39 as against W. Völker, *op. cit.*, 62–144

His soul walked along a path to God illuminated by the light of the logos, and he drank open-eyed the more than earthly glory of continually renewed revelations: his soul retained its ego even in feeling the blessedness of God's merciful love.

In his commentary on Canticles he speaks of the gradual ascent of his soul to God, but this is not connected with a technical education in meditation, nor dependent on the production of special sensibilities, but reflects, simply and clearly, a logical, inner development.

The important matter for him, as even his pupil Gregory had felt profoundly, was the complete unity of thought and action. Hence education leading towards moral conduct, towards keeping the Commandments, was placed at the beginning, and, particularly in his sermons, he used to warn hearers continually against self-confidence; he called them to a tireless warfare against sin and the temptations due to daemons. In accordance with the words of the Sermon on the Mount, he opposed the opinion of the average man, set forth a profound conception of sin, and inquired into the matter of evil thoughts. It sounds harsh when he refused those who continue to live in sin the right to share in the "communion of saints", i.e., of genuine Christians.¹ He also taught, however, that perfect righteousness before God could never be attained, and that man's righteousness was always a relative conception: it depended on the criterion employed. It was always possible, and always essential, that a Christian should maintain a higher level than a pagan. He could and should keep God's Commandments. In so doing he earned no dessert: it was his unconditional duty—the first stage of religious training. The conception of merit would only be in place where more was accomplished than the Commandments required; i.e. by asceticism, and for Origen the essential moment in asceticism was sexual continence:² what he himself had done in this respect in his youth is recorded by Eusebius.³ Only the ascetic who had trodden the path to perfection was permitted to enter on the third stage, a life enabling one to conceive the logos gnostically.

¹ *Hom. in Lev.* 4,4 p. 320 W. Völker, *op. cit.*, p. 31 f.

² *Comm. in Rom.* lib. 3,2 f. (6,178–182 Lo.) lib. 10,14 (7,423 Lo.). *Comm. in Matt.* 15,13 f. (3,352–54 Lo.). *c. Cels.* 7,48

³ *Supra*, p. 296

The idea, however, of this path, with its ascent from an earnest, moral struggle against the passions to asceticism and so to perfect knowledge, did not arise from a point of view peculiarly Christian, but corresponded to current opinion, and in particular was preached by Platonists. Here we see, not only in theory but also in Origen's practical conduct of life, the influence of Ammonios Sakkas. When we remember that, in Origen's entire system, remoteness from God is reflected in the very creation, and existence, of matter; and that the ascent of the soul implies, at the same time, redemption from the present body; then the parallel between his teaching and the philosophy of Ammonios Sakkas becomes the more illuminating. Nevertheless, even in this regard, Origen had no intention of playing the philosopher; he was a Christian, and was altogether right in feeling the harmony between his opinions and the Bible: he needed no allegory in order to discover the constituent elements of his teaching in Paul and the Gospels, and when he made use of philosophy in order to weld these elements to a unity, he had every right to do so as a systematic thinker. We must admit that he did not come to terms with the entire Paul, the entire John, the entire Gospel, but in this respect who has been his superior? What theologian to the present day is able to boast that he has laid hold of everything which the New Testament sources have given to the world? Origen lived in the Bible to an extent which perhaps no one else has rivalled, except Luther. What knowledge he gained he owed to this book. Here stood the Commandments which regulated his moral life, here echoed the instruction which pointed the way to perfection, here he perceived the voice of the logos which satisfied his Greek thirst for knowledge, and which promised future life to his soul. He read this book like a philosopher, but nevertheless learnt from it something that was higher than any kind of reason, viz. that the way to God did not open out as a reward, but was given by grace. A gifted teacher, for more than fifty years, he marched along this way and offered a practical example to multitudes of his pupils; finally, he testified to the truth of his teaching by dying a martyr's death. The marks left by the life of this Greek Christian are ineradicable, and can be seen in the life and thought of the Greek

Church, by anyone acquainted with the facts. The contest between Christianity and the syncretistic gnosticism ended, even in the sphere of knowledge, with victory for the Ecclesia Catholica: her greatest thinker had created Biblical gnosticism for her use.

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